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With Star and Crescent

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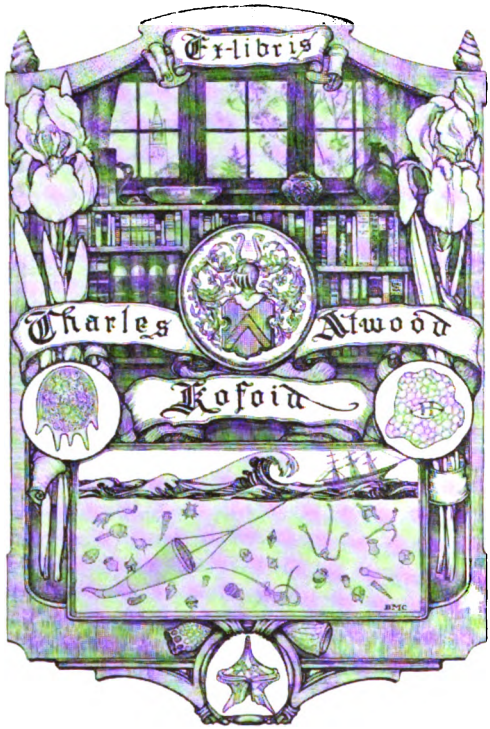

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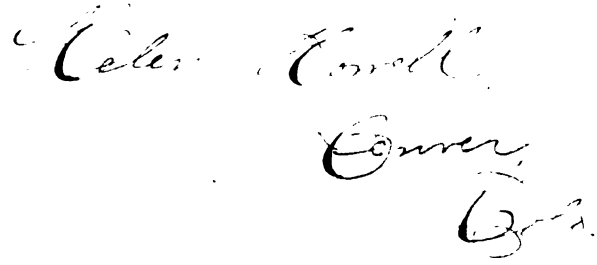

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WITH

STAR AND CRESCENT

A FULL AND AUTHENTIC ACCOUNT OF A RECENT JOURNEY WITH A CARAVAN FROM BOMBAY TO CONSTANTINOPLE, COMPRISING A DESCRIPTION OF THE COUNTRY, THE PEOPLE, AND INTERESTING ADVENTURES WITH THE NATIVES

BY

A. LOCHER

AUTHOR OF "TRIP TO INDIA" "IN THE LOORIAN DESERT," "ARAB SLAVERS," ETC.

FINELY ILLUSTRATED

PHILADELPHIA.
ÆTNA PUBLISHING COMPANY.
1890

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PREFACE.

The author of the following pages, descriptive of interesting travel, accomplished the journey therein described, in company with an attachee of the French Government, together with escorts of natives selected from place to place, as they moved forward from Bombay, the place from which they started, to Constantinople, the ultimate destination of the caravan.

The description of objects, customs, and peculiar habits of the people, and the relating of amusing and adventurous incidents, are entirely from personal observations and experiences of the author, and do not refer in any manner to any preceding publication upon a kindred subject.

The illustrations are from original pencil drawings sketched by the author upon the spot, and correctly picture the present unprogressive state of that Eastern country.

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As the caravan went into camp from time to time, unusual opportunities were afforded the author for excursions of exploration, investigation, and adventure with the rascally Bedoûins common to the deserts of Persia and Arabia.

As the rising sun first casts its effulgent rays upon the eastern horizon, leaving it, as day advances, darker and more sombre, so do *progress* and *light*, watchwords of intellectual activity, now cast their direct rays upon the more western hemisphere, leaving in fixed, apparently unalterable attitude the "orient"—the "cradle of the human family."

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I.

AT BOMBAY.

Cordial reception—Introduction to Signor P—A valuable acquaintance—Preparations for a journey together—Bound for the Persian Gulf—The Steamer "Penang"—Fellow passengers—Shoals of fish.

On the morning of the 1st of March I arrived in Bombay from a hunting expedition in the jungles and forests of Candeish and Nagpoor, where I had enjoyed, in company with two officers of the Indian army, several weeks' excellent sport in the pursuit of nearly every species of the larger game for which the interior of India is justly famous. My friends in Bombay received me with a cordiality, peculiar to European residents in India, a cordiality in fact, which I never met with in all my travels elsewhere. They evinced great disappointment when I informed them that I should be obliged to leave by the mail steamer for Arabia and the Persian Gulf, and that my departure was fixed for the 3d of March, the very day they had chosen for a picnic excursion to the far-famed caves of Elephanta; unluckily no other steamer would leave Bombay for the East Arabian coast before the following month, and as I had already remained much longer in India than I had intended, it was necessary for me to leave on the 3d.

On the day of my arrival I was introduced by my friends to Signor P——, an Italian gentleman, who after the usual preliminaries of a new acquaintaince, informed me that he should be one of my fellow traveler, and that he intended to visit Arabia, and Mesopotamia for the purpose of buying a troop of thorough-bred

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Arabian horses for Napoleon III, Emperor of the French. He was the bearer of numerous letters of introduction, and what is of infinitely more consequence in a foreign land—of credit, and had at the time of my first acquaintance with him always won the affection of all who knew him in Bombay, though he had only a few days before arrived by mail steamer from Suez (Egypt.) Signor P——on learning that Mr. W——,a European merchant of Bagdad, was my brother-in-law, informed me that he was accredited to that gentleman, and expressed in the polished manners peculiar to Italians his happiness in making my acqaintance. As he had engaged his passage on the steamer of the 3d of March, he naturally suggested that we should make the journey together, a proposition to which I of course most gladly agreed, as travelling in company with gentlemen, especially in uncivilized countries like Arabia, and Mesopotamia is always much more agreeable than travelling alone. It was therefore as much a pleasure as a duty that I should assist him in procuring certain necessary articles, which consisted of a small Indian tent, an English saddle, a dozen bridles, horse blankets, knee-caps, fire arms, ammunition, medicines, etc., in the purchase of which I was enabled to be very useful to him, as he was unacquainted with the English as well as the Hindoostanee language, and a stranger in Bombay, while I had spent three years there.

On the morning after the 3d of March we drove down to Mazegon dock, to wish a festive day, and bid farewell to the picnic party, which consisted of about twenty ladies and gentlemen, provided with a whole boat full of refreshments. As soon as the boats containing the pleasure party had left the pier, we drove hastily back to Meadow street, and 2 P. M. saw us with all our traps safely deposited on board the screw steamer "Pe-

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nang", bound for the Persian Gulf. Half an hour afterward we steamed out of the harbor, the Penang winding her way through a forest of ships and boats of all descriptions and nationalities. I had scarcely time left to cast my parting look over the extensive, busy, and highly interesting city where I had spent some of the happiest years of my life, scarcely time to look once more on the lovely islands of Salsette, Elephanta, and Carindja, with their gorgeous tropical vegetation, their beautiful hills, covered with innumerable cocoanut trees, palms, banian trees, and other majestic growth, with cacti of gigantic size, where I had first tasted the sweet independence of a hunter's life; when we passed the light house of Colaba, and already rode on the deep azure waters of the Indian ocean. Turning from a scene so fairy-like, our attention was suddenly arrested by a sight, which forcibly reminded us of the dangers we might perhaps encounter. A few hundreds yards ahead of us we could see two steamers occupied in examining a fine ship, which three days before, favored by perfectly calm weather had left the harbor like ourselves, but most mysteriously and suddenly sank in forty feet of water. There the noble craft lay, with her masts and spars looming skeleton-like out of the water, as if remonstrating against the foul play which caused her destruction. The captain of the vessel was tried for and convicted of scuttling the craft.

Once fairly out on the sea, we had ample time to look around, and make a survey of our fellow passengers. The sight was a curious and interesting one. The steamer, a vessel of about eight hundred tons, was crowded with a most varied living freight, but there was only one European beside Signor P——and myself among the representives of so many nationalities. He proved to be a young Catholic priest from Belgium, who

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had lived and labored hard and cheerfully five years in Colombo, a seaport of considerable importance on the northwestern coast of the island of Ceylon, where he had acted as a missionary, and was now returning to his native country, by the very route I intended to take in company with Signor P——,my newly acquired Bombay friend. At the dinner table we entered into conversation with the young missionary, who soon proved to be a very intelligent, liberal-minded, and exceedingly jovial fellow. On learning that we were returning to Europe together, he at once begged that he might be allowed to make up the trio of our travelling expedition, a request which we readily granted. The remainder of the passengers consisted chiefly of Mohammedans, some Persians, and some Afghans; but the greater part were natives of that portion of the Arabian coast in business relations with India. But very few Hindoos were among this assemblage, and what there were belonged exclusively to the enterprising and adventurous caste called "Marwarees." The exact prototype of this caste is found among the Jews in our own country. Dangers the greatest, or difficulties apparently the most insurmountable, do not deter them from the prosecution of their business, possessing as they do all the commercial characteristics of their Hebrew types. As a proof I need but refer to the enormous fortune of 70,000,000 rupies, equal to $35,000,000 in gold, amassed in the incredibly short space of three years by Bramchund Roychund, a Bombay Marwaree, who began life with $2.50, and an unlimited supply of assurance. During the share mania in Bombay which shook the commercial credit of the place to its very foundations in 1863–5, and when all around was financial chaos and ruin, this far-seeing Marwaree was accumulating a fortune at the rate of very nearly $32,000 per day.

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This was getting rich at a rate which would satisfy the money-making propensities of even the shrewdest American speculator.

As a contrast to this, let us glance for one moment at the portly and stern Afghan as he passes through the crowd, silently inviting attention to his dignified mien and carriage, and complacently caressing his silky black beard. How strangely his style of doing business contrasts with that of the restless Marwaree, while to the latter no amount of trouble or perseverance is thought too great to realize his gains, the former appears to scorn any manifestations of anxiety on this subject, haughtily waits for the customer to come to him, thinking apparently it would be inconsistent with his dignity to make the first advance.

The ship was so inconveniently crowded with cargo, that the comforts of the passage were not heightened by the natives being compelled to sleep on deck, with the softest piece of merchandise they could find, in the shape of iron bound bales, barrels, and sugar chests for pillows. The rights of the cabin passengers were greatly disregarded by the captain, who, being a Scotchman, and finding the European passengers largely in the minority, it being on that route, indeed, an event, for any to be passengers at all, took upon himself, either with a due regard to the religious feelings of his Mohammedan passengers, or what is perhaps more probable, with an eye to their future patronage, to place the poop deck at their disposal, for the exercise of their religious devotions, which take place five times a day, and are peculiarly solemn. During the voyage, which was a very agreeable one, we passed several ships and Arabian bagalows sailing towards ports of the Persian Gulf and India. These bagalows were heavy clumsy wooden craft, varying from fifty

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to two hundred tons, laden with dates, coffee, wheat, wool, etc. Their crews were almost in the costume, or want of costume of the garden of Eden, the "nacoda," or captain, not excepted, and consisted chiefly of Somali and Zanzibar negroes, a remarkably well built, and muscular race, imported into Arabia by slavers of that country. When within about one hundred miles of the Arabian coast, the sea became alive with shoals of fish, and we were literally cutting our way through these finny inhabitants of the deep. I do not remember ever to have seen such an immense mass of fish as off the eastern coast of Arabia.

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II.

LOOKING AROUND MUSCAT

Sighting Land—Muscat Harbor—Saluting the Mail Steamer—A Visit On Shore—Surprising the Soldiers—Inspecting the Arsenal—At the Bazaar—Arab Beauties—Driving a Pig Through the Street—Sleeping on the Roof—Returning to the Steamer—Rumored Death of the Imaum—All Aboard.

At sunrise on the morning of the 8th of March we sighted Râsal Hâd, *i. e.* "Cape of Rocks," on our lee bow, the first land perceptible when approaching from the East, but it was far from presenting a very cheerful aspect. The country along the shore seemed sterile and barren, and in the rear was a range of rugged and bleak hills, of a yellowish-red tint, apparently without the slightest sign of life or vegetation; in fact, as far as could be seen, the entire coast looked uninhabited. Two or three hours steaming brought us in sight of Râs Hairan, a rocky promontory of considerable height, standing boldly out into the sea, and forming, as it were, the southern curbstone at the entrance to the harbor of Muscat, or Mascat. On passing this cape, the town, lying snugly imbedded between immense rocks which lined both sides of the deep and narrow harbor with a natural mammoth wall, fully 250 feet high, met our view. The sight was most interesting, as at first we could only see a row of large, massive stone houses, drawn up along the beach at the innermost end of the rock-bound harbor; the most conspicuous of these buildings turned out to be the residences, three or four stories in height, of the Imaum, or Sultan, his harem, and family. On the right of the former we

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noticed an extensive two-story building, with a very decent garden, occupied by the English Consul, or Political Resident, the only European living in Muscat. By and by, as we approached nearer, we could discover on every available crag and plateau of the rocks overhanging the harbor, small forts, built evidently for the protection of the town. The inhabitants, endeavoring to complete the almost impregnable position created by Nature, have spared no pain or ingenuity in raising, upon summits of great height, these numerous little forts, which completely command the harbor and the town. The works, however, though almost inaccessible to man, one must confess would be but little use against modern artillery, as a single solid shot would be amply sufficient to cause the complete destruction of any of these fast decaying fortifications, which never could boast of good masonry, and were evidently built more for scaring away invaders, than for doing them much real injury.

On arriving in the middle of the most romantic little harbor, the usual salute of the mail steamer was fired, echoing half a dozen times with a truly apalling thunder through the rugged cliffs. No sooner had the anchor settled down into the deep sea, than we were already surrounded by a shoal of "balams," a kind of canoe, about twenty feet in length, by two in breadth, with sharp pointed ends, hollowed out of the trunk of a tree. Each canoe carried either two Arabs, or two negroes, all of them desirous to sell us fruit and fish, or to take us ashore. As we were not ready to go off in the large boat which came for the mail, the unpleasant alternative was presented of risking our lives in one of these unsafe looking craft, without a keel, or perfectly sound bottom, the slightest change of position, when in them, being amply sufficient to cause a capsize; but as

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the sea was alive with sharks, we were very careful to sit perfectly still, till we reached the shore, which we happily accomplished without accident. The first impression made upon us by the beach of Muscat, came through our olfactory organs, which were most unmistakably and unpleasantly assailed by an odor, so unlike the Eastern perfumes, of which we had read so much in the fairy tales of the "Thousand and One Nights," that an immediate investigation revealed to us the disagreeable presence of innumerable fish-heads, varying in size from a strawberry to that of a bullock's head, scattered all over the beach, in every stage of decomposition, and emanating the horrid stench in question. The natives are so accustomed to this species of perfume, that they almost appear to like it, at least they can talk away unconcernedly for hours, in the immediate neighborhood of this offal.

While recovering from the shock to our olfactory nerves, we were beset by immense numbers of the inhabitants, who seemed to be astonished at our carelessness or recklessness in venturing among them unarmed. It was evidently a novel sight, as Europeans do not often arrive in Muscat, and unless compelled, seldom go ashore, preferring, from the most authentic accounts of the manners and customs of the inhabitants, to keep them at a wholesome distance. Pressing through the crowd, we walked to the row of buildings already mentioned as appearing first in view when we entered the harbor, and found that they formed the principal part of the town. They are large, high, stone houses, built in the Arabic style with flat roofs, and but few windows; the largest is the residence of the Imaum, who was at this time absent on an expedition against the hostile Arabs of the district "El Hässa," or "El Hadjar," on the northwest frontier,

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who had been making raids into his territory. To the left of this building, and of nearly the same size is another, occupied by the "Harem," or female establishment of the Imaum, the windows of which are all iron-barred, and carefully provided with dense trellis work, thus very effectually preventing those outside gaining any view of the inmates. Both these buildings are guarded by numerous soldiers, if we may apply so respectable a term to a set of the most dirty, villainous looking ragamuffins and cut-throats it has ever been my lot to see. They were lying lazily on the stairs, and in the nooks and corners of the houses, some playing "back-gammon," and other games. They all wore the usual Arabian costume, and every one of them was provided with a sort of private arsenal on his person, in the shape of a gun, two or three pistols, a sword, and several daggers. As we passed by they gazed at us listlessly. To the right of the Sultan's residence is that of the British Consul, who is said to be on very good terms with the Imaum. The house which he occupies is undoubtedly the cleanest looking abode in the whole town of Muscat, which, I confess, is not saying much. We then proceeded to the Imaum's arsenal, a few hundred yards in the rear of his house, on the road to which our nostrils were again regaled; but this time with a new perfume, emanating from the carcasses of that animal, which is popularly supposed never to die, two dead donkeys, that had probably ended their earthly career weeks and weeks before. We arrived at the Arsenal, (a very sorry looking depot for implements of war, the building having formerly been a caravansary, or house of shelter for caravans,) a kind of square building consisting only of four naked walls, with an open court yard in the centre, enclosing an area of about two hundred feet square. At the entrance we

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were startled by the simultaneous appearance on either side of the gateway of two fierce looking guards, of the type described as stationed at the Imaum's palace. They appeared to be not less taken aback by the sight of "Frankies," which term the natives apply to all Europeans, and evidently regarded us as personages of great importance, no doubt from the imposing appearance of Signor P——, whose tall person and martial bearing heightened by his noble countenance, snow-white hair, moustache, and beard, could not fail to command respect, especially the snowy hair, which is deeply venerated, not only by the Arabs, but by all Moslems. Signor P—— always wears, with much elegance, a Turkish "fez" or "tarbush," as the Arabs call it, the well-known conical, scarlet, woolen cap, with long blue tassel, worn by the Zouaves, which caused the guard no doubt to take him for a Turkish officer of high rank; for not only did we pass unchallenged into the court yard, but they actually presented arms as we entered the arsenal.

We found a great number of old cast-iron and brass guns of English, Portugese, Turkish, Arabian, and even Indian manufacture; some lying in the open court-yard half buried in the dust, the rest elevated on miserable, rickety looking carriages, quite destitute of paint, and the iron fastenings corroded by the tooth of time. Several of these carriages afforded an amusing spectacle, as they were of most primitive construction, standing on wheels manufactured from a solid block of wood, a cross cut from a big stout tree, with only a round hole cut in the centre for the axle tree, and a stout iron hoop around the wheel. With the exception of the three or four English guns presented by the British Government to the Imaum many years ago, and which are not at all of modern construction, being old

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clumsy ship guns, all the Imaum's artillery is extremely ancient, as their shape and corroded appearance fully prove, and I would not vouch for the safety of them, should they be put to the test; at any rate I should not relish the idea of standing within ten yards of any one of them when fired off.

The small arms department was in a bad enough state, also; in fact, we could only see a pile of sorry-looking, rusty musket barrels minus their stocks, and stocks minus their barrels, intermixed with here and there a sword blade without a handle, or a handle without a sword blade, and broken off bayonets lying in the corner of the building; a heap of old iron which afforded a capital refuge to ants, lizards, rats and snakes, of the first two species of which we could see a great number enjoying a walk along the barrels, and crawling into them through the muzzles, exhibiting conjointly with the old iron, as it were, to the beholder, the insignia of peace and war in one tableaux. All the available part of the implements of war were said by the guards to be in the field, as the Imaum had ransacked his arsenal for this purpose before going to war with the troublesome Bedouins of the frontier.

Perfectly satisfied with the Imaum's fighting capacity, we left His Royal Highness' arsenal, and turned our steps toward the "Bazaar," that is the market, or rather the quarter of the town where the stalls of the merchants and dealers in the necessaries of life, as well as the workshops of all the tradesmen, from the jeweler down to the scissors grinder, are situated; in short, where all the business of the place is transacted. This is naturally the busiest and most populous part of every Eastern town, and consequently the most interesting spot to a foreigner. Almost every west Asiatic town has its bazaar, a place where you may see a long row of jeweler's

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EXAMINING ENGLISH IMPORTATIONS IN BAZAAR.

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stalls, whose proprietors and workmen are all busily engaged in manufacturing filigree work, ankle-rings, bracelets, necklaces, ear-rings, nose-rings, and finger-rings, or setting pearls, and precious stones in the same. Look at those two Bedouins ragged, dirty, regular cut throat looking fellows, they came into the town from the desert to buy, or if possible to steal something, and are gazing with covetous eyes upon the richly jeweled ornaments, to buy which they cannot afford, nor can they grasp them, and make off, as they are exhibited in a kind of iron show case, screwed firmly to the stall, looking like a square bird cage or rat trap of strong iron wire work, and only accessible to the jeweler himself by means of a key. Take a sly glance at those three young Arab beauties, unfortunately we can only suppose them to be young and pretty, for their features are closely veiled by a kind mask of red or black silk, not unlike those worn by female dominos at masquerades in our own country; but to judge by their erect carriage, their elastic step, and nicely rounded forms, distinctly discernible, in spite of their long, gaudily colored silken "Esars" or gowns, which cover them from head to foot, to judge by their large soft black eyes flashing fiery glances from between their remarkably long eye-lashes, their beautifully shaped chins, ruby lips, disclosing, when they smile, a set of enchanting, little, pearly teeth; all these compel me to think that the three women are not only young and handsome, but the daughters of wealthy parents; for their tiny hands, and well rounded arms are sparkling with richly jeweled rings, and bracelets. Their skin is almost as fair as that of a Sicilian brunette, being only tinged with a faint olive hue. They are escorted by three apparently, also young, Abissinian female slaves, who seem to be treated rather as friends, than slaves. One of the

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three fairies tries on a pair of splendid filigree ear-rings, and in doing so, sufficiently remove her mask as to unconsciously prove to us that she is really beautiful. On turning to ask the opinion of one of her friends, she for the first time discovers us watching her, and with a scarcely audible scream, retreats quick as lightning under the folds of her "Esar," whereupon they all burst into a most hearty giggling, intermixed with melodious ejaculations of astonishment.

Of course we do not stay there much longer, as the slightest familiarity with a respectable Mohammedan female by a Christian would end in the instantaneous murder of the hapless offender, and in cruel thrashing should the individual be a Mohammedan. In Bagdad I have known a miserable Hindoo, literally hacked in pieces by a fanatic mob, for having dared to lift the pagee (horse-hair veil) of a Mohammedan female of more than doubtful character in the street. This sort of vengeance is strictly executed, so that were I to see a Mohammedan women fall into a river, and in danger of drowning, I would most certainly not jump in to rescue her in the presence of Moslems, nor even offer my hand to raise one who should fall in the street, as I know too well that my life would be the price of my gallantry.

Returning to the scenery of the "Bazaar," we behold this long array of stalls, filled with cotton, silk, woolen, and linen goods from all parts of the globe. There sits a stern haughty Persian or an Afghan, surrounded by the rich produce of North Western Asia, his huge body comfortably moored in the center of a very rich carpet of Isphahan, or Mazénderan manufacture, his conical, or rather sugar loaf shaped woolen hat, two feet high, composed of a series of black dyed fleeces of lambs scarcely born, sticking out like an enormous horn

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from the back of his head, the flaps of his tight fitting short frock, generally of a green color, carefully gathered in his lap, while he is sucking solemly away at the long flexible tube of his cherished "narghileh," or water pipe, puffing in austere silence the fumes of the delicious and aromatic Isphaham tobbacco, slowly smoothing his long jet black glossy beard, and moustache, all the while staring vaguely before him, not unlike a sulky bull, or contemplating in a highly satisfactory manner his bright crimson dyed finger-nails, hardly condescending to look at the passers by, or even at buyers presenting themselves before his stall.

The next stall is occupied by a portly and ponderous Turk, on whose voluminous body it would be difficult to discover any symptoms of rapid consumption. He is neatly dressed in a long floating gown with wide hanging sleeves, generally of a bright blue, green, purple, or brown color; his head is covered with a heavy turban, a "fez," or Turkish cap encircled by a white or green scarf, embroidered with gold, a head-cover of considerable weight, and which would be unbearable in a suffocating hot country like Arabia, if the wearers did not always keep their scalps shaved scrupulously clean. He sits "a l'Oriental," in the to Americans rather uncomfortable appearing posture of a tailor, with his legs crossed under him, calmly smoking his "chibook" (a straight pipe, with a tube from four to six feet long) and exhibiting his goods consisting of linen and cotton cloth, rich woolens, silks and velvets. Though apparently so phlegmatic, that he finds it hard work to keep his eyes open during the day, he is keenly alive to his interests, as is evinced by the polite and graceful language in which he addresses his customers, and recommends his goods. The adjoining stalls are occupied by Indian Mohammedans called "Borahs," dressed in snowy

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white from head to foot, with small turbans, long, rather tight-fitting gowns, and wide trowsers, gathered at the ankles. They have come from Hindoostan laden with the rich products of that prolific and wonderful land, consisting of various kinds of magnificent precious stones, either loose, or set in filigree work of exquisite manufacture, for which India, and especially the island of Ceylon is justly famous. These stalls are also well-filled with beautiful, gaudy-colored embroideries, brought from the Punjaub, the country situated along the river Indus. Beside these goods they sell caskets, boxes, paper-knives, etc., made of the peculiar smelling sandal-wood, beautifully carved, or inlaid with ebony, ivory and silver of Bombay make, and finding ready sale here, the strong perfume of the sandal-wood being very acceptable to the female sex of Arabia.

The trade of this interesting mart is not confined to Mohammedans, as witness yonder Jew, who even here on the borders of the desert, boldly challenges the world to sell better or cheaper articles than he, violently brandishing a handkerchief of very inferior make, which he offers to sell for half its cost. However he always manages with the business tact peculiar to his remarkable and enterprising race, not to be a loser by the transaction. The other portions of the Bazaar are teeming with workmen making, and exhibiting for sale, every possible requirement for the Arab and Bedouin. Look at the gaudily dressed saddles of Arabian fashion, neatly embroidered pistol holders, leather powder flasks, shot pouches, and bridles, ornamented with "cowries," little white sea shells, which in some parts of Asia and Africa are used as currency. There are gunsmiths exhibiting a whole arsenal of fire arms, comprising the rudest, as well as the most finished specimen of warlike implements, from the Bedouin flint or

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match-lock, with a barrel of awkward length, the ponderous Portugese ship musket of very large gauge, the short Spanish blunderbuss, with its muzzle widening toward the end like a trumpet, and the Persian horse-pistol beautifully inlaid with silver, to the English shot-gun of exquisite workmanship, scimetars, yataghans and Persian straight, double edged swords, Damascene daggers, with suitable warlike inscriptions, such as "Allah protects the arm of the faithful, who brandishes this sword;" or "May the arm which wields this sword ever be victorious," "May the wearer's shadow never be less." Altogether a visit to an Arabian Bazaar is most interesting to a student of character; the scene must be personally witnessed to be fully understood, for it altogether defies description. Nevertheless picture to yourself long lines of wooden stalls, ranged on either side of the passage way, which is left from three to six feet wide, and is called by courtesy a street, in which two horses meeting can hardly pass each other. This passage is crowded with people, from sunrise to sunset, chatting, laughing, vociferating, pushing and squeezing each other; add to this a deafening noise, arising from the combined efforts of the coppersmiths, battering the metal that, they are manufacturing, the clang of the blacksmith's hammer, the battering of hundreds of shoemaker's hammers, belaboring the leather, the screaming voices of pedlars, the incessant fighting of the innumerable masterless curs that infest the place refusing to stir out of one's path, the yelling and cursing of the donkey drivers, the mournful shout of the camel drivers, with the various voices of buyers, and sellers; in short a place where everybody seems intent upon adding to the reigning chaos; picture your self all this, and you have a faint idea of an Asiatic Bazaar. The atmosphere of the Bazaar is

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naturally none of the best, the heat in these crowded thoroughfares, though they are somewhat protected from the rays of the broiling sun, by mats, which are stretched overhead across the street, and which serve only to darken the narrow and crowded passage, is always most unpleasant to foreigners; but Nature, full of compensation as she always is, mollifies this by the grateful perfume, emitted from the stalls of the dealers in the fragant spices, otto of roses, rose oil, etc., etc., of the Orient.

It was no small amount of trouble we passed through the Bazaar, brushing by well dressed merchants clad in every variety of Oriental costume, tattered Bedouins, half-naked beggars, carefully veiled females, sliding rather than walking along, in their yellow gown, or red morocco slippers, the fore part of which ends in a sharp point, and bends backward, like the iron of a pair of skates, their very loose and gaudily colored trousers tied fast round the ankle, and almost dragging on the ground. By and by we arrived at a part of the Bazaar, where the cooks, confectioners, butchers, fishmongers, fruit and vegetable dealers transact their business. The former were doing a busy trade for in front of each shop, wās a seething cauldron of meat and vegetables, which they retailed in large portions for a few paras. This was naturally the gathering place for great numbers of starving, and dirty beggars and ragamuffins who were disputing for a stray bone or rib, with the emaciated dogs, which infest in great crowds these cooking establishments.

A very profitable trade is done also by the confectioners of Muscat, who, among other sweet-meats, make a kind of solid gelatinous substance, which is composed of camel's milk, flour, wild honey and butter. This kind of sweet-meat is called "Holwa" by the natives, is very

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agreeable in taste, and nourishing, and is, I believe, very wholesome food, also. It is sold in blocks about one inch square, and is sent all over Arabia, Persia and India. The butchers of Muscat sell chiefly goat and camel meat; mutton and beef can scarcely be found in the town, as there is seldom any demand for it. Pork, of course, is quite out of the question; the pig being declared unclean food by the Koran, and is consequently a horror to Mohammedans. Calling a Mohammedan a "Chanseer," the Arabic name for pig, is the greatest insult you can offer to him. I often endangered my life by using this term when angry. For all the treasure of Golconda I would not undertake to drive a pig through the streets of any Mohammedan town unless I was tired of life, and desirous of immediately parting with it. Camel's meat is highly esteemed throughout eastern Arabia, and the killing of a young camel to supply a visitor with food is considered by the Arabs of the desert the greatest honor that can be conferred upon a guest. The meat of from two to four months' old camels is excellent food, indeed, especially when roasted, being whiter and more juicy than veal.

The greater part of the inhabitants of Muscat, however, especially the poorer classes, live almost entirely upon fish, which article of food is, as I have already stated, exceedingly abundant and cheap there. I have no doubt that this excessive consumption of fish, and the almost entire absence of bread, fruit and vegetables, the cause of the alarming number of lepers in Muscat, leprosy being almost exclusively an Oriental disease, and a main feature of the sea-coast of eastern Arabia. At least one-half the population is all the year round occupied solely with the catching, cutting up, salting or drying of fish. Immense quantities of smoked and sun-dried fish are exported from here to Persia, India,

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the Malay Islands, the islands of Zanzibar, Mauritius, and Bourbon, a great part of which is bought by the planters with which to feed the coolies or laborers. Large quantities are also consumed by the crews of the Asiatic steamers, which, with the exception of the officers and engineers, are chiefly composed of "Lascars," or East Indian sailors, and East African negroes, who subsist almost entirely upon curry, a strongly spiced Indian dish, prepared from fresh or smoked fish, chicken or eggs and rice. The vegetable market of Muscat is rather poor, the whole country round the town being so exclusively stony and barren, and the climate so very hot, that vegetables can only be raised with a great deal of trouble, and only in spots where uninterrupted irrigation can be established. Onions, garlic, a kind of white carrots, a fruit called "okkra" in India (aubergines by the French), and a species of small gherkin, were about the only vegetables I saw in the market; and of fruit, there were only a few miserable looking bananas, lemons, pomegranates and mulberries visible, dates, oranges, sweet lemons and water-melons not being in season at the time of our visit.

The streets of Muscat are all very narrow and dirty. The houses of the wealthier classes are not over two stories high built of sun-dried brick, with flat roofs, and small iron barred windows, presenting altogether a very gloomy prison-like appearance. The poorer people live in small huts made of mud blocks dried in the sun, with flat roofs, on which the inhabitants sleep at night, it being almost impossible to sleep inside the houses, the heat, even at midnight, being almost insupportable; moreover there ares warms of centipedes, scorpions, rats and mice, which usurp complete dominion over the lower part of these dwellings after darkness sets in, but strange as it may appear,

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they never venture on the roof. The dwellings in the outskirts of the town are even more slightly built than those inside the walls, being simply small huts, composed of a frame work of sticks, not over seven feet high, and covered with palm-leaf or reed-mats; the inmates sleep also on mats or coarse carpets spread on the ground in the midst of donkeys, goats, dogs, fowls and vermin, *ad libitum*. The four or five mosques or moslem temples which I noticed were large, square, stone buildings, but very plain, bearing a dilapidated appearance, and but for the cupolas surmounting the roofs and the adjacent minarets I would hardly have been able to distinguish them from the rest of the stone buildings.

The town of Muscât, which is the capital of the independent State of Muscât, is surrounded on three sides by a wall, now much dilapidated, the passages through the gates of which there are three or four, are very narrow and gloomy. The gates are made of wood, with strong iron fastenings, but they would afford poor protection for the inhabitants in case of an assault. Muscât contains from sixty to seventy thousand inhabitants, nine-tenths of whom profess the Mohammedan faith. The remainder is composed of Jews and Hindoos; the latter, however, are only temporary residents. It is considered one of the hottest places under the sun, if indeed it cannot claim pre-eminence in that respect, the thermometer varying from 34° to 44° Réaumure in the shade, equal to from 110° to 130° Fahrenheit, during the nine months of the hot season. Rain here, and as far north as the 28th degree of latitude, seldom or never falls. During the winter months, say from December to February, the soil is moistened by a heavy dew. No vegetation not even a blade of grass is to be seen, except when

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raised by artifical means. Water for domestic purposes is hoisted up with a rope fastened to a bucket, made of goat skin, lowered into cisterns or draw-wells, vary from fifty to a hundred feet in depth, by means of a wheel fixed at the mouth of the well and worked by a horse, donkey or camel. Wherever there happens to be a little soil covering the rocks, it is fertile enough and produces grass, grain, and vegetables with very light labor, irrigation alone being absolutely necessary.

Our inspection of this interesting town being finished, we hastened to the steamer, and returning to her in the frail craft which brought us ashore, passed the floating wreck of a European vessel which only a few days previous was lying quietly at anchor, laden with a cargo of dates, but during the night a fire broke out and consumed the craft. Just before we left Muscât, a rumor reached the capital, that the Imaum had suddenly died in the field, and that one of his young brothers had already assumed command of the army, but was doing all in his power to prevent the news of the Imaum's death from reaching the capital. It seems, however, that he was not successful, for a week afterwards it was known already in Bombay that the Sultan had been murdered, shot in his tent by one of his own brothers, the very villian who had assumed command of the troops, and proclaimed himslf successor to the throne. Nobody interfered in the matter, and the fratricide is now Sultan of Muscât, but in all probability will be served in the same way by one of his younger brothers sooner or later. An hour after we steamed out of the harbor, steering due north and bound for Bunder Abbas, a little seaport situated on the northern or Persian seacoast at the entrance to the Persian Gulf, on the strait of Ormus. Steaming out of the harbor of Muscât, we caught a glimpse of the town

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of Gobra, a nice little seaport, where a flotilla of the Imaum's men-of-war, consisting of two small wooden brigs and five or six schooners, were riding at anchor. Gobra lies about four miles northwest of Muscât, is like the latter surrounded by high cliffs, separated from the capital only by the range of rocks forming the western boundary of the harbor of Muscât.

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III.

ANCHORED.

Landing the Mail—Lord High Chancellor—Violent Storm—Alarm Guns—Getting Aboard—Passing the "Old Fort"—Linga—"Red and Yellow"—Beautiful Women—Pirates—Diving for Pearls—Fight Under Water—Again Aboard—Short Trip—In the Harbor of Busheer—On Shore Alone—"Arms Down"—Governor's Residence—Hiding Behind the Rail.

Ten miles north of the harbor of Muscat, we passed quite close to leeward of a small, rocky island, not over three miles in circumference, and inhabited only by wild goats, whose means of subsistence puzzled us extremely, as there is but little vegetation visible on the island. On the following morning we entered the Strait of Ormus, which is about twenty miles broad at its narrowest part, and forms the outlet of the Persian Gulf into the Indian Ocean. Here we passed on our left the Cape and Island of Musendorm, which is now a station of the Indo European Telegraph. There is a substantial stone house on the island, occupied by four employés of the telegraph, who are all Englishmen. The Island of Musendorm is hardly over two hundred yards square, a mere barren rock, and all the necessaries of life, even the water, must be brought in boats from Bunder Abbas. I do not envy the poor "knights of the wire," who are left to whatever enjoyment of life they may find on that desolate cliff. Arrived in the roadstead of Bunder Abbas we were compelled to cast anchor about a mile and a half from the shore, the water being too shallow for us to approach any nearer, and landed the mail, which I accompanied on shore, and saw safely delivered into the hands of an old and

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surly native, who combined in his single person the multifarious officers of Governor, Judge, Custom House Officer, Superintendent of Police, and Postmaster of the little seaport. My impression of the town was not favorable, it being a most miserable place, composed of about two hundred mud huts, all built on the sands, and outrageously filthy. Muscat, by comparison with this place, appeared to be a magnificent city. With the exception of a few dreary and half dried-up palm trees, scattered here and there, no vegetation was visible; the country all round Bunder Abbas being very barren and sandy. To the background of the little seaport rises an enormous mountain range, whose highest peak towers about 9,000 feet above the level of the ocean, presenting a very imposing appearance from the sea, and visible at an immense distance. This mountain range forms the natural frontier of the three most southern provinces of Persia, the Province of Beloochistân lying to the east of it, the Province of Kohistân to the north, and the Province of Kirman, in which Bunder Abba is situated, to the west.

Toward afternoon the atmosphere became extremely sultry and oppressive, the western sky assumed a copper-colored hue, and before we had time to complete our business on shore, a frightful gale of wind suddenly sprung up, lashing the sea into fury in an incredibly short time. The waves rolled appallingly high, so much so that the boisterous surf carried away all the huts that were nearest to the shore, the wretched inhabitants hardly being able to save their lives, so sudden and violent was the storm, which, by the way, had thrown our boat high and dry upon the beach. The gale, after raging about an hour, ceased as abruptly as it had commenced, and the captain, anxious, as usual, for our safety among the dastardly and fanatical natives on

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shore, and afraid that the storm might increase again, caused alarm guns to be fired, warning us to return immediately to the ship. With the assistance of a few friendly natives, we made several unsuccessful attempts to get the boat off, and were as often driven on shore; after immense difficulty we got her afloat, and then endeavored to reach the steamer; but the current was so strong that we drifted dead to leeward, and but for the captain's vigilance would inevitably have been driven out to sea. Seeing our danger, he ordered two boats with several hundred fathoms of rope to our assistance. Providentially, they intercepted our course, and catching their tow line, we were successfully brought alongside the steamer, but with considerable difficulty.

We lifted anchor for Linga, or Congoon, and had scarcely done so, when the squall, which had so instantaneously sprung up and raged so furiously, gave way to a perfect calm. The day closed with a clear and beautiful evening, and the stormy sea became, toward sunset, perfectly smooth and pellucid. Early next morning we passed between two rocky islands, "Kishm" on the north, and "Ormus," from which the strait that connects the Persian Gulf with the Gulf Oman, derives its name, to the south. The latter is much smaller than the former, but has some historic importance, owing to its having formerly been the chief stronghold of the Portugese in the Persian Gulf. The ruins of an extensive fortress built by that nation, are still visible at an immense distance on the eastern point of the island; it is said that similar fortifications formerly existed on the northern and southern coasts of the island of Kishm, by which means the Portugese effectually held the Strait of Ormus for over a century, but were driven from this position by Shah Abbas, King of Persia, assisted by the English, in the year 1622.

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Both islands belong now to the Imaum of Mâsât. They are at present inhabited by a few fishermen and their families only. Soon we lost sight of them, steaming along the Persian coast, which is very mountainous, some of the highest peaks being covered with snow during the greater part of the year. The following afternoon we sighted the little seaport of Linga, situated not far from the river Congoon, on the frontier of the two provinces of Laristân on the east, and Farsistân on the west. During our short call here, we, that is, my two companions and myself, paid a visit to the shore, and found Linga, though belonging to Persia, partly built and inhabited by Arabs, or natives of the southern shore of the Persian Gulf. The difference between the huts of Persian and Arabian architecture was very striking; all the Persian huts had slanting roofs, covered with coarse mats, while those of Arabian workmanship had flat roofs, made of a layer of brush wood, covered and made water-tight by a thick layer of clay, intermixed with short cut grass. The village of Linga is let by the Shah of Persia for a hundred years, and a good sum of money, to the Arab Sheik of Bahrein. This little colony occupies a lovely and fertile spot, with the invaluable advantage of an inexhaustible supply of pure water.

Linga is a direct and striking contrast to the wretched Bunder Abbas, the houses, though only built of mud, or sun-dried brick, are, as well as the streets, kept scrupulously clean, and the whole village is seated within a circle of date trees, whose verdant and luxurious foliage, surrounded by so much sterility, was refreshing to the sight. Although on Persian territory, the inhabitants, all of pure Arabian descent, insist on retaining their own language, manners, and customs, and appeared to me far superior to the type of Persian peas-

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antry usually found in the small ports along the Persian Gulf. The Arabs here, being, as it were, in a foreign land, seem to pride themselves on retaining their national character. Both sexes dress well, and in the romantic costume of their own country. The Arab inhabitants of Linga are not allowed to penetrate more than a hundred miles into the interior, nor do they wish to do so, being apparently quite happy to remain in what may fairly be called the Eden of the Persian Gulf. With the curiosity which is said to be an attribute of the female sex in every part of the globe, the native females seemed to think us objects of considerable interest; although the custom of the country required their faces to be closely veiled, after the fashion of the fair sex at Muscât, and avoid as much as possible the attention of foreigners, they could not restrain their inquisitiveness, for after having passed a group, we could hear them chatting and laughing, and see them peeping through the mats which serve as doors to their dwellings.

The male as well as the female population of Linga dress very much like the inhabitants of Muscât, but are superior to them in form, stature, and looks, owing probably to the healthier locality they occupy, and the less excessive use of fish as a means of subsistence; they are also neat in their habits, while the Persians of the seacoast are slovenly and filthy. The fair sex particularly appear to be superior to that of Muscât in every respect. The women of Linga seem to be passionately fond of red and yellow, for they all wear dresses of one of these colors, which peculiar taste greatly increases the bright and cheerful appearance of the village, making it like an oasis in the desert. The motley crowd of women and girls, all dressed in gaudy costume, and covered with a profusion of beads, trinkets,

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and cowrie shells, advancing slowly, but erect as statues, skilfully balancing a water-jug, with perfectly round convex bottom, on the top of their heads, from the beautiful date tree groves, surrounding the huge cisterns or draw-wells in the rear of the village, would make a subject worthy the pencil of a Murillo, or Salvator Rosa,

The cisterns which supply this little colony with water are at least a dozen in number, scattered among the many date trees, and about half a mile from the beach. They may be seen at a great distance, each being surmounted by a kind of cover or roof, built of bricks dried in the sun, and resembling a mausoleum in shape. The wells are about fifty feet deep and twenty in diameter; the buildings placed over them are about twenty feet in height, and are for the purpose of protecting the water against the heat of the sun and the dust, so that the pure element is delightfully fresh and clear as crystal. On the Arabian side of the Persian gulf, due south of Linga, lies Cape Aufir or Ofir, and to the westward of this cape is the island of Bahrein, governed by an independant Arab Shiek or Chief. The inhabitants of this island were as far back as 1850, rather notorious for their lawless life, practising piracy, and the slave trade to a considerable extent, and were it not for the continual cruising of British gunboats in their waters, they would still be very troublesome to commerce.

To the eastward of Cape Aufir lie the celebrated pearl-banks of the Persian Gulf, where at certain seasons of the year may be found a large congregation of Arab, Persian and Indian bagalows, fishing for the precious pearl-shells, which are some times very numerously found in depths varying from twenty to sixty feet. This fishery is performed in the following man-

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ner: The diver, stark naked, with only a kind of bag or pouch fastened round his loins to hold the pearl shells, and armed with a long, sharp knife in a leather sheath, strapped round the upper part of his left arm, takes firm hold with both hands of a heavy weight (a stone, a lump of iron, or lead), which is tied fast to a line or rope, the other end of which is attached to the boat, jumps overboard with this weight in his hands, and is, of course, drawn right down to the bottom of the sea; there he carries with the greatest ease the weight, which on the deck of the boat he was scarcely able to lift, and walking about with his eyes of course always wide open, picks up as many shells as he can and stows them hastily in the bag fastened round his waist; of course, never dropping the weight till he can stand it no longer without air, when he has only to let go his hold of the weight and is instantly carried like a cork to the surface, where he is taken on board, and the weight hoisted up from the deep by means of the line to which it is attached. He remains on board till he has emptied the bag of the pearl shells, which are opened by one of the crew (always the same person, in order to avoid fraud), and the pearls withdrawn, if there are any in the shell, which is not always the case. Often shells are brought up in which the animal has been dead for weeks, months, or even years, in which case the shell either contains no pearl at all, or only a yellow, light-brown, or even jet-black one, which are almost of no value; but it is very difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish the live shells from the dead ones while under water.

As soon as the diver had sufficiently recovered his breath and strength to undertake another journey to the deep, he jumps overboard again. There are generally two divers on board of each boat, who dive in

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turns, so that while one is on board, gasping for breath, the other is wandering on the bottom of the sea. They generally remain submerged from two to three minutes; very few of them can remain for five minutes. It is, altogether, an extremely hard, dangerous and unwholesome trade, as it affects the lungs fearfully, and the poor fellows never attain any great age,—at least, you never see an old diver,—they are excessively lean, and have a peculiar staring look, the natural consequence of overstraining their eyes while submerged. A pearl diver certainly requires no small amount of courage and presence of mind, as these waters are infested with innumerable sharks, which often attack them, but generally get the worst of it, as these daring fellows are always wide awake, and well aware that they cannot escape from the observation of the hyena of the briny deep. They never refuse to show fight, and generally come off victorious, though every season many of them have to pay for their courage with their lives. As a result of the dangers to which a diver is constantly exposed, they are handsomely paid, especially expert divers, who are naturally very scarce, a number of them disappearing as above stated every season, in the voluminous stomach of the monster of the deep. Few ladies, when adorning their person with these costly playthings, ever reflect at what a fearful risk of life they have been procured.

After heaving anchor at Linga, the Penang steamed toward Busheer, Abusheer or Bender Abusheer, keeping always in sight of the mountainous and desolate-looking Persian coast, and arrived there the following morning, sighting the little city from afar, built out into the sea, with its yellow stone and mud houses. We had to cast anchor at least two miles from the city, as there is a long and dangerous reef, running straight

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across the harbor, at a distance of about two miles from the uttermost end of the sandy promontory, thus successfully preventing all ships from coming nearer to the shore.

There were five or six European ships, and many Arabian and Persians bagalows riding in the roadstead, all of them busily engaged taking in, or discharging cargoes. As we had a large number of passengers, and a heavy cargo of merchandise for this port, it took us all day to discharge them, so I concluded to go on shore with my friends, that we might have a look at the place. Busheer, is situated in the province of Farsistan, and is the principal Persian seaport on the Persian Gulf, containing from fifteen to twenty thousand inhabitants, almost exclusively Persians, and Afghans. The town is built at the uttermost point of a low sandy cape, the inner part of which lies so low, that at high water, Busheer is almost an island. The houses of the town are not bad looking for Persian habitations, some of them indeed are rather well-built stone houses, flat roofed, with very small windows toward the street, like all Mohammedan houses. The streets are extremely narrow, so much so, that a man with outstretched arms can touch the houses on both sides of the street; they are outrageously dirty, and swarm with masterless dogs, noisy and cowardly curs, fighting all day among themselves, and lazily barking at the moon by night.

The governor's residence is a large, square dilapidated stone building, with many outhouses, the latter probably occupied by the numerous servants. In the middle of the courtyard stands a very decent flag-staff, evidently the work of European sailors, from the top of which floats the Persian flag, of a green color, with a yellow lion couchant gardant in the centre, and behind the same, or rather in the background thereof, the ris-

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ing sun; also in yellow. The residence and flag-staff of the British consul, and political resident is on the opposite side of the town. This consul has been the only European residing in the place until the establishment of the Indo European Telegraph, when four English employees arrived, who live now in the telegraph office, situated in the centre of the town. The male inhabitants of Busheer dress very much like the Persian merchants, mentioned in the description of the Bazaar at Muscât; nearly all of them wearing the high Persian sugar-loaf shaped hat, of black dyed lamb's fleece, tight fitting coats, closed in front, and of black, green, blue or brown color, with a white, or colored scarf round their loins, in which they generally carry a fine, silver-mounted, curved dagger, or a pair of long, single-barrelled pistols. Some of them wear also a short broad, double-edged sword, sharply pointed at the end, not unlike those once used by the Roman gladiators, dangling from a leathern belt. Nearly all of them, young men as well as old, had their finger nails painted crimson, and the palms of their hands dyed with Henna, a kind of reddish brown powder, which when mixed with fat sticks so fast to the skin, that it does not wash, or wear off for months, the dyed parts resembling in color the hands of a person, who has been peeling green walnuts. Henna is very extensively used among Persians Arabs, and Turks, and even by native Christians in the East, men dye their hair, beards, and moustaches with it, giving them a reddish brown color, considered very fashionable, especially by Mohammedans.

The Persian women wear garments very much like those of their Arabian and Turkish sisters, with the exception of the veil, which, with the women of eastern Arabia, consists of a kind of a small mask, of dark red or black silk, hiding the face from the lower eye lashes nearly down to

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the mouth, leaving the eyes, mouth and chin exposed; while the veil of the Persian women consists of a piece of white muslin, about ten inches broad by three feet long, hanging over the entire face, tied with a string round the head, and dangling nearly to the knees. The place for the eyes to look through is cut out, and a kind of needle net-work is placed there instead, through which they can see with more ease than through the muslin. Many of the Persian females also paint or dye their finger nails and the palms of their hands, as well as those of their children, with "hēnna." Girls under eight years of age do not wear the veil. The latter marry, like their Turkish, Indian and Arabian sisters, at a very early age, and it is by no means uncommon to see an Asiatic girl a wife and mother when only from ten to twelve years old, and often married to a man who might be taken for her great-grandfather.

The men of Persia are generally of a fine athletic stature, with noble features, and very erect carriage. The women are rather small in proportion, but well-developed, and, when young, generally good-looking, having finely cut features, large, jet black eyes, with a very soft expression, beautifully arched eye-brows, small mouths and pretty teeth. They fade, however, very quickly, owing, probably, to their early marriages, and a woman of thirty may be considered old. The natives of Persia, born, and living on the sea-coast, have much darker complexions than those of the interior, who are almost as fair as Europeans. The same thing is observed among the natives of Arabia, India and the whole of Africa; in fact, it is the same all over the world. The Persian of Busheer has a much darker skin than the Persian of Isphahan or Teheran; the Arab of Muscat or Aden is very dark, compared to the Arab of Bagdad or Damascus; the Hindoo of the Malabar

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coast is many shades darker than the Hindoo of Rajpootana; the Somali of the sea-coast is almost black, while the Galla is of a mahogany brown color; the Zulu, Amaponda and Fingo Caffres, on the south-east coast of Africa, might almost be termed "niggers" by the Macololo and Matabete of the interior. This establishes the fact that it is not heat alone, but heat and moisture of the atmosphere combined, which influence the color of the human skin.

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IV.

CROSSING THE GULF TO EL KURWEIT.

Starved soldiers—The first mail steamer—A rich Arab—Astonished natives—The explosion—Sheik's residence—Expensive jewelry—Viewing our steamer—Making a "salaam"—A Turkish Sherbit—Clearing a passage—"Leave your shoes at the door and keep your hat on"—Persian hospitality—Bagalows—Snowwhite donkeys—Dinner in Oriental style—Disturbed slumbers—Return to the steamer—A ride on the shatt al arab—Water Buffaloes—On a sand bank—Bassorah.

About sunset the steamer was ready for departure, and just as the last ray of the parting sun disappeared beyond the western horizon, we steamed away, steering due west, across the Gulf, to El Kurweit, or Kurein. During the night, we passed to the southward of the little island of Karak, on the northeast extremity of which there is a small wretched looking Persian fortress, occupied by a few half-starved soldiers, for what purpose I am at a loss to say. About ten o'clock, the next morning, we passed south of the little island of Feludsheh, a low, flat, sandy island, hardly visible above the level of the sea, belonging to the Sheik, or Governor of Kuweit. We arrived at the latter port an hour afterwards, casting anchor about a mile and a half from the shore, as the captain was unacquainted with the harbor, it being the first time a mail steamer had ever touched there. The reason of our doing so was that among our passengers was a very rich Arab merchant, who had several hundred bales of piece goods on board, which he had bought in Bombay. He was a near relation of the Sheik of Kuweit, and consequently a very influential man in the place, who promised the

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company all the assistance, and patronage, his influence with the Sheik might procure, if in future they would cause their steamers to touch there once a month.

On entering the harbor, or rather the bay, the steamer fired three guns, which echoed loudly over the calm, mirror-like surface of the extensive bay, surrounded on the north, west, and south by the sandy desert. The shots attracted at once the attention of the inhabitants of the little town, who all flocked to the beach, staring and gesticulating in the direction where we lay at anchor. With this exception, there reigned a dead calm everywhere, not a single boat being visibly afloat in any direction, though we could see a great many of them drawn high and dry upon the shore, looking in the distance very much like huge alligators basking in the rays of the boiling sun; and there seemed to be no dispositon on the part of the natives to get any of them afloat, to come alongside the steamer. Soon we observed a number of half naked men pouring out of a large decent locking building near the shore, which proved to be the Sheik's residence. We could see them busily occupied in lifting, and arranging something heavy, when, bang-bang—they fired two guns in quick succession, a third shot soon after came thundering over the water with a tremendous crash, which visibly caused much confusion among the crowd on shore, and led us at once to suppose that some accident had happened, as no further shots were fired. After awhile we saw a large boat launched, furnished with a sort of deck cabin, made of a frame work of wood and covered with a large green carpet. This boat rowed by ten or twelve *stalwart Arabs*, *naked to the waist*, made straight for the steamer. A jet black negro of gigantic size was at the helm, singing in a stentorian voice, a slow, long-drawn song, keeping time wtih the oars, as the

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men rowed lazily along and joined in the chorus at the end of each verse, the last word ending invariably with a soft, long drawn, melancholy sound. The boat was crowded with fine looking men, in gaudy colored Bedouin dresses, armed profusely with immensely long, single barrelled guns and pistols with flint locks, scimetars, yataghans, and daggers. These heavily armed men formed the body guard of the Sheik, who, on coming alongside stepped out of his cabin, and came on board the steamer, where he was received by his relative, the Arab merchant. They embraced in the usual Arab manner by kissing each other on both shoulders. The merchant then introduced the Captain to the Sheik, and acted as interpreter, translating the Sheik's Arabic into Hindoostanee, which latter language the Captain understood.

The Sheik was a tall, muscular man, with handsome features, and flowing silver beard. He was over eighty years of age, had a very intelligent face, and was profusely polite in his speech, and Eastern manners. He wore a magnificent silk Arabian costume, and over his shoulders hung an "abba," or mantle, of purple color richly embroidered with gold. His hands sparkled with diamond,, and in the white silken scarf round his waist, was stuck a small dagger, with a handle of solid gold, set with pearls, turquoises, rubies, and emeralds, weapons evidently intended more for show than use. He was accompanied by a crowd of followers, all in splendid costume, and dazzling with jewelry. Among them we saw several young negroes, one carrying the Sheik's scimetar, or curved sword, richly jeweled, and of exquisite workmanship. Another young negro carried his narghileh, or water pipe of Persian manufacture, the richest I have ever seen; two others carried his "shattabs," or long Turkish pipes, called "chibooks"

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by the Turks, likewise profusely ornamented. It was evident that the Sheik was prepared for the visit, and had turned out to receive the Captain in his grandest state. He solicited a view of the interior of the steamer, and was shown into the Captain's state-room, the salon, passenger's cabins, kitchen, and the engine-rooms, with the sight of which he seemed highly pleased, especially with the engine, which was made to work backwards and forwards a few evolutions for the Sheiks' inspection, a sight he had never witnessed before, although he had previously seen steamers several times in the offing, but had never before been on board of one, nor did ever any one come ashore from these vessels, which led us to suppose that they must have been British men of war, one or two of which are continually cruising in the Persian Gulf, to suppress the slave trade and piracy in those waters.

While passing through the crowd of native passengers on deck, the Sheik was every where most respectfully saluted in the Eastern manner, the natives of Hindoostan and Arabia making their salaam, which, with these two nations, consists in saluting with a low bow, touching while bowing, the middle of their foreheads with the tips of the fingers of their open hands, the palms turned inwards, while the Turks and Persians only bowed, with their forearms crossed on their breast. Among all these four nations, the custom is for inferiors to salute the superiors first, sometimes by seizing the hem or lower part of the cloak or mantle of the latter, and imprinting a kiss thereon, a salutation implying the most abject servility, and doglike humiliations, unbearable in civilized life. The Sheik having partaken of some refreshment with us in the saloon, consisting of a little cup of strong, pure coffee, in the Oriental style, a glass of sherbet or Eastern lemonade, and some sweet-

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meats, invited the Captain and all the European passengers to dine with him, and spend the night on shore, an invitation which the Captain accepted, more to oblige the Sheik, and for the sake of business than for his own pleasure. Being urgently requested to accompany him, we went along; he leaving orders that a boat should be sent for us at sunrise the next morning. On our way to the shore, the Sheik told us that one of his guns had burst, killing two men on the spot, and wounding severely four or five more. He would have fired more guns, but for the accident, which completely demoralized his artillery.

On our arrival, we found the beach crowded with spectators of both sexes, eager to see the "Nacoda," or Captain of the "fire-ship" as they called the steamer, shooting through the water, without any sails set even when there was not a breath of wind, and without the use of oars. Our little Scotch Captain was snugly rigged in his new uniform, and had a small straight sword dangling from his side, which, like the Sheik's dagger, seemed more intended for show, than use. But for the presence of the Sheik, we should certainly have been crushed by the crowd, so eager were they to catch a glimpse of the Feringhies, or Frankies (Europeans); many of them, especially the females, had probably never seen such creatures in their lives before. The guards of the Sheik cleared us a passage through the crowd, rather roughly it is true, and we arrived safely at his residence, a strong, square, brick building, with a spacious courtyard inside, in the middle of which was a cluster of small straggling trees, and flowers, an apology for a garden. We were led by the Sheik into his reception hall, a spacious lofty room, admitting fresh air, and daylight through two windows and the door which led into the courtyard.

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The room was simply a large apartment with white-washed walls, and ceiling, painted with a sort of scanty blue fresco, the only ornament of Mohammedan houses, pictures of any living thing being strictly prohibited by the Koran. The whole floor was covered with rich Persian carpets, and along the walls of the room were purple divans, a kind of low flat, broad sofa, on which the Turks, as also the Persians and Arabs, male as well as female, squat cross-legged after the fashion of our journeymen tailors, when they are at work. It is a rather tiresome and uncomfortable posture for Europeans, but one soon becomes accustomed to it. It is the usual way of sitting with all Moslems, also with most of the natives of Asia, who can occupy this position for hours or even days, without becoming tired. There is a Mohammedan custom, that whenever a man or woman enter either their own or any person's room, they leave their shoes or slippers outside the door, or at least slip them off before sitting on the divan, in the above-mentioned manner. All Mohammedans except the military, however high their position, comply with this custom, and it is considered a great favor and sign of deep respect shown them, if European visitors will consent to accept and wear a kind of very light Morocco slippers in exchange for their shoes or boots, as long as they remain in the room.

In well-bred society of civilized countries it is considered a gross insult not to take off one's hat when entering a room, but among Mohammedans it is just the reverse; they never take off their head-dress, be it turban, Persian hat, keffich or fez, except on going to bed at night; and no European acquainted with the manners and customs of Mohammedans, will ever take off his hat in their presence, unless he wishes to insult them. When entering the Shiek's room, therefore, we kept

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our hats tight on our heads, but slipped off our boots at the entrance on the appearance of four gaudily dressed negro boys, each bearing in his hands a pair of perfectly new yellow morocco slippers, with upturned points. We put them on, walked gravely to the divan, and being invited by the Sheik to take a seat, slipped them off again, and seated ourselves cross-legged in true Oriental style, the captain starting a fresh conversation with our host, the Arab merchant being interpreter. Narghilehs and shattabs filled with fragrant tobacco and ready lighted were brought by the negro boys, and we puffed away right lustily. Presently a slave brought a heavy silver censer resembling a candelabra, from which emanated a most delicious perfume, and placed it in the middle of the room. Other slaves placed themselves one by the side of each European, one by the side of the Shiek, and one by his intrepreter, waving large fans of ostrich feathers, gently stirring the perfumed air and driving away the innumerable flies. Others again made their appearance, each bearing a little silver tray, on which stood five or six tiny gold goblets (looking just like egg cups), filled with excellent but very strong coffee, which they served and retired, returning presently with other trays, on which they offered us little rose-colored goblets filled with sherbert, a delicious Persian drink, most nearly resembling an excellent lemonade; wine and spirits of any kind being strictly forbidden to true believers by the Koran. Beside sherbert they offered us Holwa from Muscat, the sweetmeat previously described.

With the exception of Signor P—— who had spent over twenty years of his life in Egypt and Arabia, none of us felt at all comfortable in the cross-legged Oriental position we had adopted, as was evident by the contortions of our faces, and the anxious glances we cast at

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each other. Finally, it becoming unendurable, we resolved to take a walk to see the town, when the Shiek ordered that eight "cavasses" or guards should attend us. This escort the captain endeavored with great politeness to decline, but in vain, and they proved very useful in keeping the wondering crowd and importunate beggars at a respectable distance. We found the town greatly resembling Muscat, but differing advantageously from that city in regard to cleanliness; Kuweit being remarkably clean for an Arab town, though up to the time of our visit it had scarcely ever been visited by a European, and was looked upon as an out of the way place, even by the Arabs.

El Kuweit or Kurein is situated about forty miles due south from the mouth of the Shatt al Arab (the joint waters of the rivers Euphrates and Tigris), and consequently on the Arabian coast. It is a seaport, containing from fifteen to twenty thousand inhabitants almost exclusively Arabs, and is the most northern seaport of the country, "El Hassa," or "El Hadjar," which territory is known also as "Arabia Deserta." The climate of Kuweit is fearfully hot, the town being surrounded on the north, south, and west by the dismal desert "El Dahana." So hot and barren indeed is the neighborbood of Kuweit, that with the exception of the Sheik's little garden in the courtyard of his residence, not a tree, shrub, or even blade of grass is visible either in, or out of the town as far as the eye can reach. There is no soil, nothing but glowing, drifting sand from the adjoining desert, and many of the houses most distant from the shore are buried almost to the roofs in sand drifts. But there are said to be some small oases in the desert, within thirty miles of the town, scattered here and there, like islands in the ocean; spots where grass, and bushes are growing in consequence of the presence

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of water, more or less abundant, and it is partly from these fertile spots, partly from Bassorah, near the mouth of the Shatt al Arab, that the Kuweities obtain their supplies of vegetable food for man and beast. From Bassorah they bring whole cargoes of rice, dates, coffee, barley, corn, straw, etc. in their bagalows. These bagalows are heavy, roughly built sail boats, carrying from fifty to two hundred and fifty tons of cargo; their hull is very broad wedge-shaped, the keel sharp, and the rudder very uncouth, being ridiculously large and clumsey. On the after part of the vessel, is a kind of a cabin, or state-room, on the top of which the helmsman stands, managing the unweildy rudder by means of a long pole fixed at one end in a horizontal position to the rudder, which serves fixed in this way as a handle or lever to the latter. The bagalow carries but one mast, standing in the middle of the craft; but this mast instead of being upright, or inclining slightly backwards, as in our American craft, stands forward at an angle of nearly sixty degrees. To the top of this mast, the large and single sail is hoisted by means of a pulley. The most striking peculiarity of the bagalow is that when loaded and under sail, her bow is only two to six feet above the water's edge, while the man at the helm stands ten or even twenty feet above the same, according to the size of the craft. Notwithstanding the singularly awkward shape of these boats, the Arabs sail exceedingly well in them, and venture out even in the roughest weather; in some of the larger ones, they make voyages as far as India, Madagascar, Mauritius, and the eastern coast of Africa.

The male inhabitants of Kuweit are nearly all either merchants or sailors, trading with Bassorah, and the Persian coast, or with the wild Bedouin tribes of the desert, in the pearls, frankincense, firearms, ammu-

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nition, cloth, saddles, carpets, etc., for skins, sheep's wool, camel's hair, gum arabic, coffee, dates, etc. Many of the inhabitants raise herds of sheep, horses, donkeys, goats and camels, which they rear on the oases above mentioned; their camels are celebrated throughout Arabia for their great speed and endurance, as are their snow-white donkeys also. The women of Kuweit are reputed for their industry, and skill at all sorts of handiwork such as knitting, spinning, weaving, etc., as well as for their good looks, they being considered even by the Turks and Persians, as by far the handsomest women along the Persian Gulf.

On our return to the Sheik's residence, we found him still sitting cross-legged on the very spot where we had left him, busily engaged in giving orders to his slaves, who were making preparations to serve up dinner. The table, if I may call it so, was already laid, in the shape of an Indian straw mat of fine texture, about ten feet square, spread on the rich Persian carpet which covered the floor. Half a dozen soft pillows, covered with blue cloth, having tassels at each corner, were laid on the mat in a circle, at equal distances from each other, and intended as seats for the guests. Before each pillow lay a little yellow straw mat, perfectly round, about two feet in diameter, and as finely knit as a Panama hat. In the middle of each of these mats, stood a kind of heavy silver bowel, empty as yet, and on each side of it was a silver goblet, one containing water, the other sour milk called "Laban" by the Arabs, but from what animal it came, or where the Sheik got it, I was at a loss to know, for we had seen neither cow, sheep, mare or female camel in the whole town. We were afterwards told that it was milk of camels or dromedaries, which are kept in large numbers by the Kuweites on one of the above mentioned oases in the

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desert, and the milk had been brought to town on the back of one of the animals in a bag made of goat skin, the usual implement for carrying water, milk, oil, butter, etc., in Arabia.

But what struck me most forcibly in the arrangement of the dinner table was a beautiful set of silver cutlery of European manufacture, evidently perfectly new, having as we afterwards learned been brought from Bombay by the Arab merchant. We were naturally anxious to see the Sheik, and his enterprising nephew handle for the first time in their lives these implements of civilized gastronomy. Dinner was served in superb style, the slaves bring in an immense variety of dishes, consisting of boiled goat's flesh, a lamb roasted whole, roasted camel's meat, chicken, three varieties of fish, and "pellauw" (a dish composed of cooked rice, butter, onions sliced, almonds, raisins and roast chicken, which forms the national dish of Arabia, and is somewhat similar to a dish, common in the northern part of Africa, called Kusskussoo). Besides these dishes, there was a profuse supply of vegetables, and fruit indigenous to Arabia, but brought from Bassorah. The whole dinner was indeed worthy of a "chef de cuisine."

When all was served, our host, taking his seat "à l'Orientale," motioned us to do the same, and helped himself first to a portion of every dish; not from want of courtesy, but because it is the Arabian custom, to show that the food has not been tampered with or poisoned. As soon as these tasting formalities had been gone through with by our host, we all fell to, and helped ourselves "à discrétion" to everything. The conversation came to a pause for a while till the dinner was nearly over, the Sheik, and his relative amusing us hugely, by the extremely awkward manner in which they handled their forks, and spoons, being evidently

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much more used to eat with their fingers. Forks and spoons are nowhere used by the natives of the East, owing probably to the aversion of all Orientals to deviate from the manners and customs of their ancestors in need. I question whether even the Sultan himself makes use of them when taking his meals privately. The bread, which was served to us at the table, was good, baked in the shape of a pancake, and made of corn, ground with the common Eastern hand-mill, which is composed of two round flat stones, resembling two grindstones, lying horizontally upon each other. The upper stone turns round on a swivel in the centre, when moved by means of a wooden handle fixed vertically into the stone near the edge. Through a hole, also in the upper stone, the corn is made to fall between the two flat stones, and is there crushed and ground by the pressure and friction of the upper stone on the lower one, and ejected in the shape of coarse flour. I need hardly say it is the most primitive mill known, and had probably already been in use in the time of Abraham.

There was also abundance of butter and cheese; the former however was not very good, having a strong disagreeable taste, it was made from the milk of sheep. The cheese called "chibben" by the natives, was greenish white of good taste and made of goat's and sheep milk. I fear our appetites must have appeared very vulgar to our host and his relative; at all events they ate very sparingly, and chiefly of vegetables, the natives of Arabia being very abstinent, and preferring vegetable to animal food. Dinner being ended we resumed our pipes, coffee and sherbet, which were served as before. By this time the day was far advanced and the sun fast disappearing in the West, compelling our host to beg leave to preform his prayer and ablutions.

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During his absence, we conversed about our day's interesting experience. On his return, he invited us to accompany him to the flat roof of the house, which throughout Arabia is the usual place of promenade, it being by far the best place to enjoy the evening breeze. The roof also serves as dormitory for the inhabitants, who are compelled by the excessive heat of the atmosphere to sleep on the top of these houses, the only place open to the fresh air and comparatively free from dust and vermin. The bedding is carried into the house in the morning, and placed on the roof again shortly before sunset. From the top of the roof, we had an extensive view over the tranquil bay containing 3024 small, barren islands, and saw our steamer quietly at anchor. The whole population of Kuweit seemed to have assembled on their roofs to enjoy the refreshing breeze, which came wafted gently across the bay. The scene before us was one of great interest. Here was a faithful Mohammedan still engaged in earnest prayer; there a young couple whispering the soft tale of love, further on a mother tending her children, and Arab maidens singing their melodiously plaintive native songs, and there far out in the desert several solitary travelers, on foot, on horseback and on camels, the dark forms of which contrasted strangely with the golden horizon in the background. An American sleeping for the first time on the roof of an Arabian house, feels himself in an extremely awkward position, the privacy of the bedroom is entirely gone, and he feels the unpleasant sensation of being an object of intense curiosity to the occupants of the adjoining houses, with all his movements closely watched. The unconcerned manner of the natives however, and their indifference to the scrutiny of their neighbors, soon has a reassuring effect upon him, and he retires with the most stoical "non-chalance."

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As in all Southern countries, darkness soon succeeds to sunset. There being scarcely any twilight in Arabia, the weary traveler may be seen hastening into the villages before nightfall, to avoid falling into the hands of highway robbers, coming across wild beasts, losing his way, etc., etc., dangers which are imminent to the belated wanderer, especially if he should be wandering after nightfall in the desert. As the evening wears on, the hum of human voices gradually dies away, and the calm stillness of the night is broken only by the plaintive barking of the innumerable masterless dogs that infest all Eastern towns, and whose appetites seem whetted by the refreshing and invigorating night breeze; during the hottest part of the day they generally lie sleeping among the ruins and by-places, whence they emerge toward nightfall. About midnight, the dogs get tired of barking, but hardly has their noise ceased for five minutes, when the whining howl of a solitary jackal may be heard in the distance; soon he is joined by another, then by a third, a fourth, and so on, till the horrible noise seems to be produced by thousands of these wily and cowardly midnight prowlers. But hark! What unearthly sound meets my ears just now? And why have the voices of the jackals so suddenly died away? Now you may hear it again—a horrible, hoarse laughter; the laughter of a maniac. No! No! It is not the laughter of a human being; see how the cowardly curs sneak away through the desolate streets, their tails pressed tightly between their legs, looking anxiously for some place of refuge; could they speak they would tell you that they had heard the laughter of the ghastly hyena, attracted, perhaps, from a distance of twenty miles, by the fetid smell of the putrid carcass of some fallen animal, lying somewhere in the suburbs; the gentle evening breeze, wafting from the

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sea, carried the loathsome-smelling message to the avenger of the dismal desert.

Our host had provided us with silken couches, on which, fanned all night by the gentle sea-breeze, we slept so soundly that the Sheik was obliged to waken us in the morning, for fear that the powerful rays of the rising sun might fall on our faces ere we rose—a thing much dreaded by all the Arabs, as it invariably causes intense headache to the inconsiderate sleeper. Looking round, we saw the jolly-boat from the steamer already waiting for us at the beach, which hastened our departure. After cordially thanking our host for his sumptuous hospitality, which brought a beam of sunshine over his stern and swarthy face, the Captain promised to use all his powers of persuasion to cause Kuweit henceforth to be made a regular place of calling for the Company's steamers, which promise visibly brightened the usually serious countenance of our host still more than our eulogies of his unlimited hospitality, as the latter is a virtue pertaining to every Arab, however poor he may be. There is scarcely a doubt, though, that our host expected to hear this remark from the Captain, which circumstance had no small weight in the more than ordinary cordiality of our entertainment. The Sheik accompanied us to the beach, and his last words were an apology for not saluting us on our departure, owing to a fear that after the disastrous effects caused by an explosion of one of his guns in saluting us on our arrival, the two that remained might meet with a similar fate if put to the test again. The imminent peril to which his men might be exposed by a second discharge of the guns, seemed to be a secondary consideration with him—quite a business-like view of things we thought.

After we arrived on board once more, the captain

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ordered a parting salute of three guns to be fired, and we steamed out of the harbor, the Sheik as a matter of politeness remaining on the beach surrounded by his people, till we had disappeared from his sight.

An hour before sunrise the next morning we entered the mouth of the Shatt al Arab, the name given by the natives to the joint waters of the two large rivers Euphrates and Tigris. The Shatt al Arab is about two miles wide, and navigable from its mouth up to Bassorah for large ships. The territory on the right bank is under Turkish rule, as is that on the left bank as far down as Mohammra, from this place down to the mouth of the river the territory on the left bank belongs to Persia. Soon after entering the river, we passed Fao, one of the stations of the Indo-European telegraph, situated on the right bank, which is here very low and swampy, and therefore exceedingly unhealthy, especially during the hot season. The Telegraph station consists of a very inferior looking wooden building, provided with two verandahs, and surrounded by native huts and a couple of little outhouses; it is occupied by four young English telegraph operators in the service of the British Government. The swampy country all around is covered with large herds of cattle, especially water-buffaloes belonging to the Arabs.

The water-buffalo, as its name implies, belongs to the bovine race, and though not quite so high in stature as a full grown ox, is considerably longer in the body, heavier and stronger built than the latter; the skin is very thick, jet black, and almost destitute of hair, something like an elephant's, but tighly stretched over the body of the animal. The scanty hair that is visible is black or dark gray, and very bristly; the older the animal the more devoid it is of hair, the skin of the calves being quite well covered with it. The

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head is large and bony, furnished with a powerful pair of black horns, sometimes over three feet long, falling in a curve along the neck of the animal. The forehead is covered with black curls, and the ears with long bristly hair. The neck is very short, and almost stiff, the animal generally carrying his head stretched straight before him. The legs are very stout and bony and seem shorter than those of the ox. Its gait is very slow and ambling, but when excited it can run quite fast. Notwithstanding their savage appearance they are generally good natured. The milk of the water-buffalo is not as white as that of the common cow, having a slightly bluish color; nor is it as rich and nourishing. As the name indicates the animal is exceedingly found of water, and will not thrive in districts where that element is scanty. They will remain during the hotter part of the day completely immersed with nothing but their nostrils out of the water; where it is not deep enough to submerge their bodies, they will roll till they are perfectly covered with mud. They are excellent swimmers, and are therefore used by the Arabs inhabiting the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates as a kind of living ferry boat, the natives traversing these rivers on the broad backs of these animals. The water-buffalo is indigenous to India, Arabia, Egypt, and Northern Africa, where it is kept in large numbers. Their meat is inferior to that of the ox.

An hour after passing Fao, we arrived at Mohammra, a wretched little town on the right bank or Persian side of the river, surrounded by a dense forest of date trees, which are almost the first trees to be seen as you steam up the river. The town is situated about two miles from the bank of the Shatt al Arab, on the triangular piece of land formed by the confluence of the

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THE NOVEL MODE OF CROSSING THE TIGRIS.

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Kuren or Karoon river with the Shatt al Arab. The former is an important tributary of the latter, and has its source in the mountainous regions of the province of Looristan. Mohammra is a fearfully dirty place, inhabited by about five thousand persons, chiefly Persian, who live in wretched little flat roofed houses built of mud blocks dried in the sun. The town lies almost level with the water's edge, and is surrounded by immense swamps. The locality is therefore considered very unhealthy, even by the natives, and absolutely uninhabitable by Europeans, at least during the summer. Mohammra and Busheer were taken by the English about thirty years ago, when the latter were engaged in war with the Persians; butsoon after were restored to the Shah of Persia.

Passing Mohammra about eight o'clock in the morning we arrived in the course of an hour near two little islands situated in the middle of the river, and covered with date trees of a majestic growth. Here the steamer ran upon a sand bank, but was got off without much exertion. Another hour's steaming brought us to anchor in front of the Custom House of Bassora. Here we had to take leave of the good steamer "Penang," which had brought us safely thus far. After wishing a hearty "God speed" to the captain we transferred our luggage to the river steamer "Dijelah" or "Tigris," which was to convey us to Bagdad, and went to pay a visit to the town of Basra or Bassora, which we found to be a miserable, filthy, unhealthy place of considerable extent, lying in a very low swampy position, notorious for the prevalence of fever and ague. A few centuries ago this place covered an area of several miles, containing then over two hundred thousand inhabitants; but at the time of our visit the population scarcely numbered forty thousand, mostly Moslems.

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The diminution is owing entirely to the plague which with all its horrors has repeatedly visited this place. This terrible disease, though somewhat resembling the cholera, is far more sudden and deadly than the latter, as those attacked never by any possibility recover, but die a few hours after they are seized, the body after death becoming of a sickly leaden hue. The last visitation of this scourge was in 1831, I believe, when great numbers fell before this fatal foe, so that Bassora is now but scantily populated, and the place is in a most miserable plight. It has also suffered greatly from the incursions of hostile Bedouin tribes during the last century. The town of Bassora was built about the year 635 by the caliph Omar I, and up to the seventeenth century was one of the chief places of merchantile importance in Western Asia; but the greater part of it is now in ruins. It lies about a mile from the left bank of the river, with which it is connected by a narrow muddy canal, on whose shallow waters communication with the Tigris is kept up by means of balams, the little frail craft mentioned in the description of Muscat. Bassora is surrounded by a huge mud wall, which may in former days have afforded some protection against the marauding Bedouins, but is now lying in ruins. The streets are narrow, crooked, and filthy; the houses gloomy, one and two story buildings, of sun-dried bricks, with flat roofs, while the poorer classes live in little huts made of mud mixed with short cut straw. The Bazaars formerly famous throughout Asia now present a very poor appearance, and are barely worth seeing. The atmosphere of Bassora is fearfully hot and oppressive, which makes the town absolutely uninhabitable for Europeans in summer.

It is garrisoned by about one thousand Turkish troops, and on the river rides the terrible Turkish fleet

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of the Persian Gulf, consisting of four miserably-armed and unseaworthy schooners. Bassora is now only important as an exporting place for horses, sheep's wool, dates and grain, which are raised on a large scale, about 30,000 tons of produce being exported every year, principally to India, Mauritius, to the ports on the Red Sea, and to Europe. Bassora is, like Muscat, notorious for its slave markets, the traffic in human beings, though ostensibly prevented by the Turkish authorities, is, in reality, not interfered with at all by those worthies, unless a slave dealer should refuse to pay the necessary bribe, which, as slaves are almost as current as specie, and the latter not always being at hand, usually consists in the present of a valuable female slave. To this circumstance is owing the fact that the houses of the higher government officials are the principal and best stocked slave depots in the town.

During my subsequent stay in Bagdad, I had occasion to accompany a young friend to Bassora on matters of business, which necessitated a two days' residence in that place. Our agent, before he was employed in legitimate business, had speculated extensively in slaves, and was consequently on intimate terms with nearly all the dealers in human flesh of Bassora, an acquaintance not so easily obtained as might be imagined, the slave dealers in that part of the country being peculiarly cautious and reticent. Our agent, anxious to make our stay in the wretched town of Bassora as agreeable and interesting as possible, invited us one morning to walk with him to the Bazaar. After an hour's ramble through the over-crowded locality, we took refuge from the over-powering heat in one of those impromptu coffee houses which abound in all Mohammedan cities. This "café," like the majority of these Arabian coffee-drinking establishments, consists merely of a small

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space of level ground, overshadowed by a roof of date-tree leaves, supported by four poles, beneath which stood an indefinite number of little rickety wooden stools and large benches for the customers. In one corner was a hearth made of mud, on which crackled a small fire, for the purpose of brewing the favorite beverage of the Arab, or, indeed, of the Moslem, called by the Arabs cáhuêh, from which we derive our word coffee.

After having swallowed the customary "fenchan" (a tiny cup, not larger than an egg cup) of delicious coffee, we mused the time away with the inevitable narghitch, the soothing fumes of which seemed for the time to constitute our entire happiness. We had evidently dropped into one of the swell establishments of this kind in the town, for it was crowded with customers of all complexions, customs, and languages, hailing from every part of western Asia, the enterprising "Borah" or Mohammedan merchant from Hindoostan, the taciturn Afghan, the noisy Beloochee, the stern Persian, the portly Turk, the lazy Koord or Turkoman, the grave Arab, the reticent Bedouin, the circumspect Armenian, the wide awake Tchoodee or Hebrew, and the unconcerned negro, were all to be found under the hospitable shelter of the café, and attracted our attention. For some time I had noticed that a tall, powerfully built Arab, whose open garment displayed a brawny chest such as Hercules might have envied, was casting peculiar glances at us, and I almost came to suspect that he meant mischief. I soon found, however, that this was not the case, for he walked straight up to our agent, and, without uttering a word, tapped him on the shoulder, and walked out of the establishment. The agent evidently knew him, and also what was meant by the tap, for he rose immediately, begging us to excuse him (frequent dealing with Europeans had

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taught him some faint knowledge of etiquette), as he would soon return. A short distance from the café the two held a brief consultation, and then separated, the tall fellow disappearing in the crowd thronging the narrow, gloomy streets of the Bazaar, the other resuming his seat near us.

The latter seemed unwilling to speak for some minutes, when suddenly he told us that his brother in Bagdad had sent him word to buy him a good slave girl, and if we had no objection to accompany him to the residence of one of the dealers, he would be highly honored by our company.

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V.

MOSLEM SLAVES.

Residence of Arab Slaver—Getting Admitted—The Serdap—Passing Examination—Cheerful Subjects—Beauty—Purchase—Smuggling.

The surprise and the novelty of the invitation induced us to accept it at once, and we forthwith followed our friend through the intricate windings of a labyrinth of exceedingly narrow, crooked, and filthy lanes, and so-colled short cuts, which lead from the main street of the Bazaar to the residence of the Arab slaver.

After walking briskly for about a quarter of an hour, we suddenly came to a stand-still before a large, and very decent looking dwelling-house, decent at least for that part of the world. Our pilot knocked twice with a peculiar rap on the ponderous wooden door, but nobody seemed stirring in the house. All was silent as the grave, and the sound of our summons echoed dismally through the halls and corridors of an apparently uninhabited building. Nothing daunted by the apparent uselessness of his repeated efforts to obtain admittance, our friend stoically persevered in rapping at certain intervals, till finally our patience was crowned with success. A plaintive voice issuing from behind the wooden trellis-work of a "chenashiel" (projecting window-balcony) overhead, asked what we wanted. Our agent pronounced the name of the tall fellow who had taken him aside in the coffee house, whereupon a sort of consenting grunt was returned. Presently we heard somebody lazily dragging a pair of slippershod feet across the paved courtyard, approach, and unbolt the heavy door, which opened with a loud creak, and

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introduced to our presence an old shrivelled negro woman, who evidently knew our worthy guide, for with a sort of half grin, half smile, she seized the hem of his long "abba," imprinting upon it a sort of submissive kiss, while to us strangers, she only tendered the customary salaam, at the same time casting an anxious look at our friend, as if to inquire whether she should let the two "giaours" (unbelievers) cross the threshold; but on learning from him that we were his "habibs" (friends), she seemed forthwith to feel at ease. In the meantime the tall, athletic fellow, who had so unceremoniously taken our friend aside at the Bazaar, and then disappeared, issued from the serdap (a kind of vaulted basement apartment peculiar to Lower Mesopotamia). After the usual exchange of salaams, our agent introduced my friend and myself to the proprietor of the house, in a half Oriental, half French style, which produced an involuntary smile upon our features, most impolite and undignified behavior, I acknowledge, in the presence of a stern Arab, particularly a stranger.

Our new acquaintance, however, took no notice of our breach of Moslem etiquette, and led us into a serdap (not the one whence he had issued), where we squatted "à l'Orientale" (cross-legged) on a fine, soft divan, and were at once served with the usual fenchan of delicious coffee, and a fragrant narghilch for each of us, by two little Nubian boys, about ten years of age, nicely dressed in Arab costume—no business transaction being considered possible in Irak Arabi without the usual preliminaries of coffee sipping and tobacco puffing. Shortly after we had finished our narghilchs, our new acquaintance walked up to a gong, a kind of metallic basin, dangling like a bell, from a chain attached to the ceiling, and gave it a rap, thereby producing a loud, vibrating sound. This was evidently

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done to give notice of our coming, that the slaves might be prepared for our visit; about five minutes after he motioned us to rise and follow him. Obeying the signal, we were conducted by the proprietor across the court yard to the serdap, whence he had issued on our entering the house. As we crossed the yard we heard a lively chatting of female voices in a strange language, intermixed with Arab words; but this conversation stopped abruptly when we entered the serdap (a nice cool vault of considerable dimensions, but rather gloomy looking, owing to a deficiency of daylight, which was, however, somewhat improved by raising the straw mats which hung over the window-openings), and there we found ourselves in the presence of about twenty young females of the Nubian, Abyssinian, Galla, and Somali type, and of all ages, from ten to eighteen years. They occupied, in various more or less graceful attitudes, a large divan, which extended on three sides of the apartment, and were all dressed in dark-blue cotton shirts, very loose, and reaching nearly to their feet. They all looked healthy and satisfied with their situations, some even appeared cheerful, faintly smiling, and seeming to care very little for the presence of their owner and our Arab companion, but staring wildly at my friend and myself, visibly more from curiosity than fright, having undoubtedly, never before seen an American or European. The Abyssinian damsels were by far the fairest of the collection, one or two of them being almost as fair as mulattoes. Their features were regular, and exhibited scarcely any trace of Ethiopian origin. They wore their hair, or rather wool, considerably long, were very slender, and not nearly as robust looking as their darker sisters, but had very small hands and feet. The Nubian beauties were almost jet black, with a kind of velvety smoothness of

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skin. They bore more traces of Ethiopian descent than the Abyssinians, but not to an unpleasant degree. They had oval faces, foreheads considerably high, large, round, flashing eyes, voluptuous coral lips, and the most beautiful teeth I ever saw human beings possessed of, though the snowy whiteness of the teeth was probably the more striking from its strange contrast with the darkness of the skin. The Galla maidens were fairer than the Nubians, their skin being of a dark walnut color, thin features, too, showed little of the negro type, but their hair or wool was very short. They were more strongly built than either the Abyssinians or Nubians, and slightly inclined to embonpoint. The Somali girls betrayed more negro characteristics than either of the others. Their skins were quite black, and they had regular negro features, with short wool, short necks, broad shoulders, big feet, and small hands. If we had been asked like Prince "Paris" of old, to give prizes to the several nationalities, according to their respective claims to beauty, we would have unhesitatingly given the first to the Abyssinians, to the Nubians the second, to the Galla maidens the third, and to the Somali the fourth, or consolation prize.

While my friend and myself were busily engaged in discussing the respective qualities of these representatives of four nationalities, the proprietor, by a motion of his hand, required one of the best looking, an Abyssinian girl about 16 years old, to accompany our Arab friend and himself to the other end of the serdap, where there was more daylight. My friend and myself thinking that our Arab companion had finished the business, and had already bought the girl who followed them, also went to the other end of the serdhap, where we witnessed the final examination, which was very

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much as a butcher or horse dealer examines an ox or horse he intends buying, lifting her eyelids with their rude fingers, and staring into her eyes, feeling and counting her teeth, feeling her hips, sounding her chest, etc. The would-be purchaser seemed to be satisfied with her appearance and condition, and well he might be, for her face was good looking, and Venus herself might have envied her bust. After about ten minutes her master uttered the word "Rooch!"* ("Go!") whereupon she at once returned, smilingly to her companions on the divan. It seems, however, that the two Arabs could not agree as to her price, which was 8,500 Turkish piastres, about $383 in American gold; for they subsequently called up nearly all of the stronger girls, and subjected them to the same process. Though my friend and myself were thoroughly disgusted with the treatment of the poor creatures, we could not leave the room without thereby insulting the proprietor of the house, and our Arab friend also, which we were unwilling to do, as both were very influential men in the town. We therefore waited bon gré, mal gré, till they had finished their nefarious business transaction, which resulted in settling upon a price for a strapping Nubian lass, fourteen years old, with good-looking features, but blessed with a complexion as black as a rook, for the sum of 5,250 Turkish piastres, about $226 American gold, to be paid on delivery. The heroine of this little business matter was the most unconcerned of the trio, as she knew nothing of her fate till the next day, when she was removed to the house of her purchaser. Though the above incidents are not cheerful to contemplate, the life of the Moslem slave is by no means as dreadful as might be supposed; but is

*The "ch" pronounced gutturally, as in the Scotch word "Loch"—lake.

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The Shah of Persia.

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[illegible] as a bu[illegible] or horse [illegible] or [illegible] lifting her eyelids with their [illegible] fingers, and staring into her eyes, feeling and counting her teeth, feeling her hips, sounding her chest, etc. The would-be purchaser seemed to be satisfied with her appearance and condition, and well he might be, for her face was good looking, and Venus herself might have envied her bust. After about ten minutes her master uttered the word "Rooch!"* ("Go!") whereupon she at once returned, smilingly to her companions on the divan. It seems, however, that the two [illegible] could not agree as to her price which was 7,500 Turkish piastres, about $383 in American gold; they subsequently called up nearly all of the stronger girls, and subjected them to the same process. The my friend and myself were thoroughly disgusted with the treatment of the poor creatures, we could not [illegible] without thereby insulting the proprietor of the house, and our Arab friend also, who was more unwilling to leave, as both were [illegible] the [illegible] in the town. We therefore waited [illegible] gentlemen [illegible] they had finished their negotiation [illegible] which resulted in settling upon a [illegible] Nubian [illegible] years old, [illegible] good-looking [illegible] but [illegible] for the sum of [illegible] American gold, to be paid [illegible] of this little business matter was the most unconcerned of the trio, as she knew nothing of her fate [illegible] day when she was removed to the house of her purchaser. Though the above is [illegible] not cheerful to contemplate, the lot of the Moslem slaves is by no means as dreadful as might be supposed; [illegible]

*The "ch" pronounced gutturally, as in the Scotch word "loch."—[illegible]

Shah of Persia.

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infinitely superior to that of a slave on a plantation in the West Indies, a great deal better than that of a Hindoo or Chinese Coolie, and perfect happiness compared to that of a poor father of a numerous family, who has to struggle to gain a livelihood for his loving but perhaps invalid wife, and some half dozen or more little children.

The Moslem slave is well fed, well clothed, and has but little work to do; if it is a female slave, she has only to take care of a child or two, do some little cooking, or if she happens to be young and handsome, spends an easy, lazy life in the harem. If it be a male slave, he has perhaps to keep his master's saddle horse in order, keep the court yard clean, go on errands, or serve the customary coffee, and the tobacco-smoking implements to his master, and the guests of the latter. The slaves eat the same food as their masters, sometimes even out of the same plate. They sleep on the same roof with their master's family, are allowed to marry, and their children are treated almost like members of the family, and are not as a rule considered as slaves, at any rate are seldom disposed of for money. Owing to this kind treatment it is therefore not often the case that a slave runs away from a Moslem, and rarely leaves his or her master even after being presented with his or her freedom; of course they are all supposed to profess the Moslem religion, and their children are brought up in this faith. Female slaves generally bring rather higher prices than males, as they are less numerous in the market, and their transport more difficult and expensive than that of the latter. They are also less likely to run away from their masters, and are therefore more in demand. The greater part of the Negro slaves in Asia come from Eastern Africa, where they are stolen by professional slave hunters, and sold by them for money

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or merchandise in the ports situated along the seacoast. Thence they are transported, partly by sea, partly by land, to Egypt, Arabia, Turkey, Mesopotamia, Persia and Afghanistan. As far back as the year 1850 thousands of slaves were annually imported by Moslems into Arabia, Mesopotamia and Persia. Then they could be bought for a mere trifle, say $20; but since then the British cruisers in the Red Sea, Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf, have greatly spoiled this flourishing trade, according to the notions of the worthies who had been engaged in the business; as they hang all the slavers, and destroy all the shipping engaged in this nefarious traffic, whenever they catch them. A proceeding for which the world should give them due credit.

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VI.

STEAMING TO BAGDAD.

Mohammed Ali—A "Serenade"—Taking invoice of our Passengers—Fig trees en Route—Tax—Mesopotamia—Hadiska—Horni—Garden of Eden—Climbing the famous Trees—On a sand Bank—Tomb of Ezra—New Passengers.

As the river steamer Dijileh (the Arabic name for the river Tigris), which was to bring us up to Bagdad, did not leave Bassorah till the following morning, we accepted an invitation to dinner, from Mr. J., the British Vice-consul of Bassorah, who resides in a big extension "khan" or caravan serai, (an Oriental building with a spacious courtyard in its centre, large enough to contain a small caravan.) This khan is situated about four miles from Bassorah, higher up the river, on its right bank, at a place called Marghill, or Koot al Frankee, by the Arabs, the latter of which means "Harbor of the Franks or Europeans," because the main building in the little village is the khan occupied by a European. The natives of Marghill live in miserable little huts built of clay and covered with leaves of the date tree, manufactured into a kind of coarse mat. These trees are so very abundant along the river, that they literally cover in some places both banks of the broad Shatt al Arab with a dense forest.

We ascended the river from Bassorah to Marghill, in the small sailboat of the Penang, and as there was a good strong breeze at the time, the gallant little craft sailed up the river in splendid style, in spite of the strong current, and we landed at Marghill in a very short time. Mr. J. welcomed us heartily, and presented

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us to His Highness Mohammed Ali, youngest brother of the murdered Imaum of Muscat, who had been encamped with his unfortunate brother and the troops on the frontier, and hearing of the Imaum's assassination by his own brother, Said Selim, had managed to avoid a similar fate from the hands of this precious relative, by a hasty escape in disguise, on the back of a fleet dromedary, across the desert El Hammad or El Dahna into Turkish territory, where he at once placed himself under the protection of Mr. J., the British Vice Consul of Bassorah. Mohammed Ali is a young man, about sixteen or seventeen years old, rather small in stature for his age, light brown complexion, handsome features, jet black hair, large black eyes, finely shaped nose, somewhat thick lips, slight appearance of mustache and beard, and a mouth filled with beautiful teeth. He wore European clothes of a light brown color, and sported a blazing red smoking cap, richly embroidered with gold, of Cashmere work jauntily stuck on the right side of his head. He spoke the Arabic, Hindoostanee, Persian, and Turkish language fluently; but did not look very intelligent after all, having rather a sleepy, indolent appearance. He seemed not to be in the least disconcerted by the sudden and melancholy end of his eldest brother, and appeared only happy to find his own head still upon his shoulders. That it did remain there was probably owing less to his own shrewdness and sagacity than to the fidelity of some poor, half starved "Maherry," or camel driver, who at the risk of his own life, piloted him safely across the dismal desert El Hammad into Bassorah. We found Mr. J., the Vice-Consul, settled in a very comfortable residence at Marghill, a building that was twenty times too large for a bachelor. The apartments he occupied were richly furnished, and provided with every possible

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European comfort, so that visitors feel quite at home, and can even enjoy a finely fitted up billiard saloon on the premises, a luxury very rarely to be met with in these countries

The dinner was all that might be expected from the well-known princely hospitality of our host. After dinner, or rather supper, we adjourned to the flat roof of the building, where we found the beds already spread. Here we enjoyed our host's fragrant Manila cigars for awhile, and then went down to play billiards; but the atmosphere was so oppressively hot that we could not stay in the billiard room, but were obliged to return to the roof. Toward midnight we thought it advisable to retire to rest; but soon found that sleep was out of the question, for though all our beds were provided with fine mosquito netting, the little winged tormenters nevertheless managed in some way to get inside of them, and began their attacks upon us with vengeance, alighting on every inch of skin that was left uncovered. To hide our faces beneath the sheets would simply have been an attempt at suicide by smothering, as the air was outrageously hot. But even without the presence of the terrible mosquitos, we would have found it hard work to fall asleep, as the noise of millions of musically inclined frogs, innumerable curs barking at the moon, and the yet more disagreeable howling and yelling of large gangs of cowardly jackals in the surrounding forest of date trees, and on the swampy river-banks, was deafening, and literally defying all description. With a desperate rush we jump from our beds much to the amusement of our fugitive Arab prince, a native of this wretched country, and that of our host, an old resident, who being acclimated, were left scathless by the mosquitos, and had by dint of time, become so accus-

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tomed to the above mentioned night serenade, that to use their own expression "they rather liked it!"

It is a well-known fact that in all countries where mosquitos, sand fleas, and other phlebotomists of the same kind abound, new comers, and new residents will always be far more liable to suffer from their attacks, than the natives, or those whose life has been "long in the land." In fact natives often remain quite untouched by these obnoxious insects, simply because they are acclimated. These diminutive tormentors abound in hot climates where the blood of the inhabitants of those regions is thinner, and lighter colored than that of persons coming from colder climates, it is therefore quite natural that the mosquitos and fleas should prefer the latter, when they have a chance to obtain it. Though we did not relish the idea of lying awake all night, we had perforce to submit, and make the best of a bad bargain; so we quietly extended our patronage to our host's cigars and liquors, keeping up a dense smoke, and lively conversation till about daybreak, when we heard the distant stroke of our paddle wheel steamer working up the river, and the first rays of the rising sun found us upon the deck of the "Dijeleh," bound for Bagdad, and loaded down to the water's edge with a varied cargo of human beings, and goods of every description.

Signor P. Monseigneur M. or Father M., as we used to call him, and myself were the only European passengers on board the steamer. Our companions were merchants from all parts of the Persian Gulf, proceeding to Bagdad on business, a number of Arabs of both sexes, and some Jews from Bassorah. Most of the latter were accompanied by their families, and engaged on a pilgrimage to Ezra. El Asr, or Oseir, a kind of mausoleum, or building over a tomb, where according to the

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traditions of the Jews, the prophet Ezra is buried, who, according to the Bible, lived in Babylon about the year 458 B. C. We steamed the whole day between interminable forests of date trees, which covered both banks of Shatt al Arab, and give the country a cheerful and fertile appearance. These forests do not however grow far inland, as the date tree only thrives where water is plentiful, and where continual irrigation can be maintained. The natives remote from the river appear either too lazy, or more likely too poor to cut canals into the country, as no trees are visible beyond about five hundred yards from the river. I subsequently learned that this apparent neglect is not owing to indolence or pecuniary difficulties on the part of the natives; but simply to the oppressive rule of the Turkish authorities, who levy an annual tax of not less than fifty Turkish piastres, equal to about two dollars and a quarter of American gold, on every date-tree however small, planted by the inhabitants; and as it takes at least ten years from the time of planting the young tree till it bears its first fruit, the tree costs its owner for government tax alone twenty-seven dollars in gold, not to speak of the labor required, irrigation by natural or artificial means being necessary, day and night, almost without interruption through the whole ten years. When the tree is old enough to bear fruit, it will yield a yearly produce of from one to four dollars, of which the Turkish Government claims two and a quarter as an annual tax. It is not therefore astonishing, and not to be taken as a proof of indolence, that the oppressed natives not only abstain from planting date-trees; but destroy thousands of those which, though fully grown, do not yield sufficiently to pay the cruel taxes imposed by the authorities. Is it any longer astonishing, and inexplicable that Mesopotamia, once one of the most beau-

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tiful, the most densely populated, and the most fertile countries of the globe, should now be nothing more than an endless wilderness, scorched and parched by the broiling sun, and hardly inhabited by anybody except wandering Bedouins, and wild beasts. Mesopotamia, once the "Garden of Eden," the cradle of mankind is now almost deserted by human beings, and only fit to be inhabited by the abstemious camel, the cowardly hyena, and the loathsome vulture, the two latter only able to keep themselves from starvation by devouring the emaciated carcass of the former.

Mesopotamia that once yielded food for more than fifty million of people, and now scarcely provides for the insignificant wants of a few, straggling Bedouin tribes, has still the same rich and productive soil it boasted when the Almighty selected this country for the site of Paradise, and created our great father Adam to pass his life here in endless bliss. It is the same fertile land as when gigantic Babylon and Niniveh, now almost a myth, were in their glory, and shown as the finest jewels in the tiara of the old and powerful Assyrian monarchy; but innumerable cruel wars, and consequent devastation, famine and pestilence, assisted by despotic governments, have naturally produced depopulation and general ruin.

We passed the little village of Hadidsha on the left bank of the river, and, an hour after, arrived at Korna, or Gorna, a station where the steamers have to stop for an hour or two to take in fuel. Korna is a little Arab village, snugly ensconced in a cluster of beautiful date, fig, pomegranate, lemon and orange trees, at the uttermost point or promontory formed by the confluence of the stately, broad and wonderfully clear waters of the famous river, Euphrates, with the less broad, but deeper, and more muddy, but scarcely less fa-

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mous Tigris, both of which derive their waters from the Alpine region of northern Koordistân, whence they roll, the Tigris in the north, and the Euphrates in the south, through the whole length of Mesopotamia, finally effecting a junction at Korna; whence, the joint waters flow, under the name of "Shatt al Arab," toward the Persian Gulf, receiving, a few hundred yards below Korna, on the left river bank, the stagnant waters of the Shaāb, or Kercha, which originates in the snow-covered peaks of the Persian province of Looristan, glides slowly through the immensely large and deadly Samargha swamps, and mixes its stagnant waters of an inky hue with those of the mighty "Shatt al Arab."

A lovelier and more enchanting spot than this little Korna, at the confluence of these three mighty rivers, so different in their character, can hardly be found in parched and desolate Mesopotamia. But what makes the place, though scarcely known in the civilized world, of great interest to all, is the staunch belief of the Turks, Arabs and Persians, as well as most of the savants of the civilized world, that it is the site of the famous Garden of Eden, or Paradise of the Bible (Genesis, Chap. ii., v. 14); only a few of the latter trying to make themselves and other people believe that Father Adam tramped the soil of Paradise, either on the island of Ceylon or in Central Asia. I naturally felt an ardent desire to see an old and knotted wild fig-tree pointed out by the natives to all visitors there, as a descendant of the identical tree that about six thousand years ago had the unspeakable honor of furnishing the material to our common parents, Adam and Eve, for their first clothing. Though harboring some doubts with regard to the pedigrce of the fig-tree, which the people of Korna are so anxious to show to visitors, I could not help feeling some slight emotion when we

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arrived near the spot pointed out by an old Arab, who served as our guide, as the ground once trodden by the happy couple, our first parents. The tree in question was hidden in a cluster of trees of different species, not more than five hundred yards distant from the place where our steamer lay. The Captain, who had many times previously visited the famous spot, was not able to find the tree, though to me it appeared easily recognizable by the knotted and scarred appearance of its trunk, covered by the still visible initials and names of former visitors, two or three of which would hardly have been left by their respective owners to record their folly, if they had not believed in the historical identity of the spot, if not in the reputed descent of the tree itself. Being ourselves more disposed to believe this spot the original site of Paradise, than to trust the descent of the famous tree, we turned to retrace our way to the steamer, when it occurred to us that we ought to take a small supply of the first clothing material of our ancestors with us as a souvenir of the memorable spot. We, therefore, turned to the tree, which, by the way, is about twenty feet in height, with a knotty, knobby, but nearly erect trunk, almost three feet in diameter, and tried to get some leaves; but the lower branches being already picked clean, we could not reach high enough to procure any, so I determined to climb the tree, and take my choice of fruit and leaves; when, lo! I had scarcely embraced the gnarled and half-decayed trunk preparatory to climbing, when I saw a beautiful snake of a magnificent green hue on the back, and a yellowish white on the belly, shoot out of a hole in the tree just above my head, where a branch had once been broken off, drop down in the long, dry, yellowish grass underneath the tree, and disappear before my companions could kill it with their sticks. It was

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VISITING THE FAMOUS FIG TREE.

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about five feet long, but not more than a finger in circumference round the largest part of the body, and belonged to a species very abundant in the gardens and plantations of India, and some parts of the Persian Gulf, called the whip snake, from its slender body resembling the thong of a whip. This snake lives almost exclusively in trees with green foliage, where it can easily hide itself, being of the same hue, and darting from beneath the leaves upon birds, mice, squirrels, etc. I subsequently saw several specimens of this snake in the gardens of Bagdad, where they generally hide in the fresh and fragrant foliage of the orange trees, and jasmine bushes. They are said to be venomous. This incident of the serpent's presence rather served to strengthen our belief in the identity of the spot. Having made sure, by battering the hollow trunk with our sticks, that it contained no more snakes, I crawled up and obtained a good supply of the celebrated leaves, which I intended to dry and take to America. I do not know whether my two companions succeeded in doing so or not. Some young ladies in Bagdad, Aleppo and Smyrna, on hearing that I had in my possession some of the leaves with which Mother Eve made her first attempt at dress-making, were very anxious to cultivate my acquaintance, and succeeded so well that they managed to wheedle me entirely out of them. However, if any of the pretty young ladies of America should wish to see Mother Eve's first article of dress, she has only but to apply to Captain H—— of Bagdad, Mesopotamia, who, by the way, though a married man, is a gallant old fellow, and will be happy to call at the original millinery store in Korna, and procure the desired supply.

As I was gazing upon the site of ancient Paradise, I thought I might just as well profit by the opportunity

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to ask for the tree which produced the fatal apple, the taste of which plunged the hitherto happy couple into so much trouble; but nobody knew anything about it, though I could scarcely believe the apple tree had gone, when I looked in the direction where the snake had disappeared. All the episodes of the last days of Adam and Eve in Paradise, involuntarily flashed through our minds, and some of us actually turned round more than once on our march back, almost dreading to see the cherubims, with their long and flaming swords, follow us in order to regain the leaves and fruit we had stolen from the figtree of the Garden of Eden.

We had stopped at Korna considerably longer than we had expected, but finally got under weigh again, and proceeded at a brisk rate up the tortuous river, in order to get as quickly as possible out of reach of the pernicious exhalations of the immense Samargha swamps, extending between the rivers Tigris and Shaāb, as well as those of the Aboo Kelam swamps, which extend between the Tigris and Euphrates These swamps of course have not existed in the days of Adam, as it is not at all likely that the Creator surrounded the beautiful Garden of Eden, the abode of his masterpiece, man, by such horrid marshes as now encircle the lovely Korna with an ocean of stagnant water and tall reeds, abounding with reptiles and water fowl of every description. The real cause of the existence of these swamps is evidently the total neglect, and consequent choking up of the numerous canals, which the ancient rulers of Babylonia had cut from one river to the other for the purpose of irrigating the intermediate territory. But time and neglect have woefully changed the aspect of the country since the fall of Babylon. Endless flats of tall grass now occupy the place of former corn fields of equal extent, and

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where formerly millions of happy human beings lived, now roam lions, hyenas, jackals, boars, wolves, and gazelles, and breed millions of flamingos, pelicans, cranes, geese, ducks, partridges, bustard, etc., and reptiles without number, all in perpetual warfare with each other.

What a splendid field of action for the sportsman. Hardly inferior to the vast jungles of Hindoostan, or the boundless Karoos of South Africa; for here, in Mesopotamia, the plucky sportsman can bestride a steed, which has no equal on the globe for the superior qualities which make a horse a perfect hunter, and as such an inestimable jewel to the true sportman. I have enjoyed the pleasures of a hunter's life in the jungles of India, on the Karoos of South Africa, and in the forests of Madagascar, and I fearlessly assert that I have never seen a horse equal to the Mesopotamian thoroughbred Bedouin steed. If Mesopotamia is the cradle of mankind, it is also the original and natural home of the horse; let others say what they like about English, American, or any other breed of horses, my unalterable opinion is that the Arab steed, and among this blood the Mesopotamian in particular, is the king of the whole equine race, both in beauty and symmetry of body, as well as in those qualities which often make them seem almost endowed with reason.

During the night we suddenly came to a standstill for several hours, the steamer having in the darkness run upon a sand-bank in the river; but by dint of hard labor, the crew finally got her off, and we reached "Ezra," "El Asr," or "Oseir," just at sunrise the next morning, where the majority of the Jewish passengers left the steamer. Ezra is a great resort of Jewish pilgrims, and said to be the tomb of the prophet Ezra,

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who according to Biblical tradition was such a favorite with Artaxerxes, about the year 457 before Christ, ruler of Media and Babylonia.

The mausoleum lies upon the right river bank, close to the water's edge, and is composed of a large high square building of brick work, apparently very old, with two or three small iron barred windows on each side of the building, at an elevation of at least twenty feet from the ground. The top, or rather the flat roof, is surmounted by a large cupola covered with glazed bricks of a greenish blue color like the mosques or Mohammedan temples, or like some of the Russian churches.

To satisfy our curiosity, we went to have a look at this place held in such reverence by the Jews. On entering the building, we found ourselves in a large, square courtyard, paved with glazed brick slabs, laid out in mosaic style. A draw well or cistern occupied the middle of the yard, out of which the pilgrims drew water by means of a wheel winding up a rope to which a leather bucket was attached. From the courtyard, a dark narrow corridor led to a spacious, square hall, scantily lighted by a few brass lamps suspended from the ceiling. The centre of the hall was occupied by a large, dark gray tombstone placed on the prophet's grave, and covered with inscriptions in Hebrew characters. Ranged along the naked walls were a number of Jews of both sexes, old and young, leaning with their faces toward the wall, and their backs toward the grave, hiding their faces, some praying, some shouting and gesticulating, others sobbing and crying, all apparently bemoaning the death of the prophet. There were other rooms in the building, but as we found the atmosphere in these vaulted halls rather sultry, and impregnated with an inexplicable odor, we did not look at the other

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apartments, but beat a hasty retreat into the open air.

On board we found many new passengers of both sexes, all of them Jews from Bagdad, who having performed their religious duty of lamenting the death of the prophet were returning to their homes. All bore, without exception, those unmistakable features which betray the member of the Hebrew faith all over the world. The high, narrow, receding forehead, large eyes and heavy eyebrows, prominent aquiline nose, full voluptuous lips, and nicely rounded chin, with the strong beard, and moustache of the man; their exceedingly expressive gesticulations with hands, shoulders, and eyebrows betray their origin at once. The Jews of the Orient may also be easily distinguished by their manner of dress. The men wear a long, loose, white muslin shirt, and over it a long gown closed in front, reaching nearly to their feet, made of striped cotton cloth, with wide open sleeves, loose trowsers of white muslin or cotton, open at the bottom of the leg, not gathered like a bag round the ankle, as is the Mohammedan fashion. The male sex also wears a long striped waistcoat of gaudy colors, closed from the neck downwards with a profusion of flat, square silver buttons. Both sexes wear short white socks, and a kind of lemon colored morocco slippers, the toe ending in a sharp point bending back, like the iron on a pair of skates. Round the loins the men wear a white or colored muslin scarf, in which they usually carry in dagger-like fashion a small brass inkstand, with hermetically shutting cover, attached to a tube of the same metal, containing their pens, which are made of thin reeds. On their heads, which they shave clean, with the exception of a long lock of hair dangling from each temple, the men wear a large red Fez, or Tarbush, with a heavy

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tassle of blue silk, surrounded by a thin, dotted or striped muslin scarf, the tassle hanging over the back of the head. Strange to say in all my travels, I never saw an Oriental Jew carry arms of any sort, even when they were travelling through very unsafe parts of the country. I cannot give a reason for this, not do I know whether it is forbidden by their religion. The fair sex wear very loose drawers of thin white muslin, embroidered with flowers, reaching nearly to the ground, and gathered round the ankle. Over this garment, they wear a kind of petticoat also of embroidered muslin or striped cotton cloth with narrow sleeves, very much in the fashion of our ladies forty years ago, when they were as yet innocent of hoop skirts. This cloak is open in front over the bosom, which is covered with a piece of almost transparent muslin fastened round their necks like what the French call a chemisette. Their rich black hair is invariably parted in the middle, and hangs down over their backs in from two to six long luxuriant braids. A blue, white, or light green handkerchief is worn turban-fashion over their heads, jauntily inclining on one side. Girls and young women, especially those of the weathy classes sometimes wear a small cap of red, blue, yellow, or white silk or velvet, richly embroidered, with the handkerchief above mentioned tied turban-fashion around it. Inside their houses the women and girls move about with their faces uncovered; but when they go out of doors, they cover their faces with the "pāgee," a piece of black horse hair cloth, about eighteen inches long, by twelve in width, which is tied with a string round their foreheads. This cloth is perfectly transparent, but impenetrable to the eye of the outsider. Over all their garments, they wear the "Esar," a kind of thin sheet, or shawl of striped cotton or silk of various colors, not unlike, but consid-

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erably larger than the mantillas worn by the ladies of Malta, Spain, Mexico and Peru, which is coquettishly drawn over their persons, shrouding them from head to foot, except their faces, which are already sufficiently veiled by the "pāgee." The Jews of both sexes are generally very good looking; but the women are small, and slightly built, and their beauty fades soon after marriage.

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VII.

ABOUT BAGDAD.

The Canal—Shooting Pelicans and Jackals—A Fuel Station—Trapping a Lion—Anecdote—Camels—Getting Food—Caravan in Distance—Camp of Bedouins—Shamamia—Shooting Pigs.

Toward noon of the same day we reached a ruined and deserted fortress called Yuwar. It is situated on the right bank of the river at a spot where the remains of a large broad canal are still visible. This canal is called by the Arabs, "Ommal Chamâl," now completely filled with mud and overgrown with grass. It was evidently used in former times for irrigating purposes, or as a kind of short-cut route for boats to go from the Euphrates to the Tigris, and *vice versa*, which at the present day can only be accomplished in a vessel or boat by going down to Korna, at the confluence of the two rivers. The canal appears to be of very great age, and was probably constructed by some of the rulers of ancient Chaldea, in the time when gigantic Babylon was in its glory. The whole extent of Mesopotamia, above and below Bagdad, abounds in these neglected and dried-up canals, nearly all dating from the time when that country was the garden of the then known world. In my opinion, the swampiness of Lower Mesopotamia, and the sterility of Upper Mesopotamia, is unmistakably owing to the gross neglect of these canals.

The higher we advanced up the river, the less swampy seemed the country, and the more scarce became vegetation along the river banks. Soon after we passed Inwar the swamps disappeared altogether.

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We whiled away the time very agreeably on board, amusing ourselves from morning till night with rifle practice, trying our skill on the immense numbers of wild geese and ducks flying in every direction on our approach. We also fired at the stately rose-colored and white flamingos, stalking gravely about in the shallow places of the river, standing upright and soldier-like on their long slender legs. Sometimes we sent a bullet whizzing into the midst of a congregation of thoughtful, or sleepy looking pelicans, standing motionless on the sand banks of the river, basking their snow white bodies in the broiling sun, too lazy to take wing till they saw one of their number knocked over by a bullet, when they always made off in great haste, rising in a circle high up in the air, but returning to their old quarters when we were out of range. About an hour before sunset we invariably saw a couple of jackals sneak along the river banks, waylaying the innumerable black partridges as they came out of the tall grass to the bank to quench their thirst. Many a jackal knocked over by our rifles rolled down the banks into the water, and took free passage down the river to the Persian Gulf.

On the morning after we passed Inwar, we were awakened about sunrise by a tremendous shouting and yelling of the deck passengers, and presently heard several shots fired in quick succession. We jumped hastily from our beds, firmly believing that the steamer had been attacked by Bedouins; but looking from the cabin windows, we saw three splendid Asiatic lions walk slowly up the bank. One of them, a beautiful, noble looking male of large size, stopped, and turning majestically round, calmly watched the crowded steamer as she passed within sixty yards of him, apparently wondering what those people were making such a fuss

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about. Unluckily, the captain was asleep, having turned in a short time previously from his night watch on deck. He subsequently told us that if he had seen the lions, he would have stopped the steamer for a short time, so that we might have had a shot at them. As bad luck would have it, our boat turned a curve in the river before we could get our firearms.

A few hours afterward, we arrived at the second fuel station of the steamer, situated about half an hour's walk from the little Arab village called Yubeila, on the right bank of the river, the same bank on which we saw the lions. Here we were to stop for an hour an a half to take in fuel, so we went ashore (accompanied by the purser, a passionate lover of sport), with our rifles on our shoulders, to ask the Arab in charge of the station if there was any game in the neighborhood. We found him in his little mud hut cleaning a tremendous long, single-barreled matchlock gun, and far from being in a good humor. Questioning him as to what had disturbed his equanimity, he told us that two days before the lions had killed one of his two cows, his only property, and had dragged the carcass into the tall, reedy grass, about half a mile distant from the hut, and there devoured it. He followed their track the next morning, and found the bones and horns of the hapless cow on the very spot where he had shot a lion about three months previously, and whose skin was then in possession of Captain H. of our river boat. Having sworn revenge, our surly Arab, the day before our arrival, had brought a dying donkey, which he intended to use as bait for the lions, on his shoulders all the way from Yubeila, depositing it near the spot where the remains of the murdered cow lay. There he dug a deep hole, which he carefully covered with brushwood, leaving only a small hole, through which to put his gun

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barrel. He ensconced himself therein shortly after nightfall, anxiously awaiting the appearance of the lions, whose powerful roar not far distant he heard soon after the moon had risen. He waited and waited, doubled up like a monkey in his deep, narrow watch hole, almost suffocated by the intense heat, and suffering terribly from thirst in consequence, without daring to stir. About three in the morning he heard a scarcely audible step outside, and, gazing through the loophole, could just see a huge lion trot off and disappear in the tall grass, carrying the donkey's body with him as easily as a cat carries a mouse. The brute, becoming suspicious, had sneaked on his belly to the dying donkey, snatched it up and bolted instantly. The Arab, of course, did not think it prudent to follow in the dark, and retraced his steps, sullenly, to his hut on the banks of the river, where we found him brooding over his bad luck, evidently not in the best of humor, having just returned from a march through the reeds without having tracked the lion or its prey. A fortnight afterwards Captain H. brought a freshly flayed lion's skin to Bagdad, a present from the persevering Arab, who watched for the beast till he succeeded in putting a bullet through its heart as it was drinking out of the river.

The Asiatic lion, though slightly inferior to his African brother in size, strength, and courage, is nevertheless far from being a despisable antagonist for the hunter, especially after he has been wounded. The Asiatic lion is maneless, like the lioness, while the African lions, especially those of North and South Africa, have beautiful dark brown manes, which sometimes almost reach the ground, giving the animal a commanding and majestic appearance never to be forgotten when once seen at close quarters, but hardly vis-

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ible on the poor specimen exhibited in menageries. The Asiatic lion is seldom heard to roar, and then only in short single growls, while the stony ravines of Mount Atlas in Algeria, the barren flats of the Karoos, and the reedy banks of the Orange, Vaal, and Limpopo rivers, in South Africa, sometimes in sultry moonlight nights, literally shake under the incredibly powerful echo of the voice of the king of the wilderness; a long drawn, vibrating roar, of such tremendous power that it strikes terror into the hearts of all the rest of the animal world, and sadly tries the nerves of even the bravest man, when heard for the first time through the thin canvas of a frail tent. The home of the Asiatic lion is Arabia, the southern part of Palestine, Lower Mesopotamia, Southern Persia, and Northwestern India; but it is most frequently found in Lower Mesopotamia and the district of Rajpootana, in Northwestern India; I doubt its being found farther north than the 35th degree of latitude. The following anecdote, for the truth of which I can vouch, was told to me by several European residents of Bagdad.

A few years ago Captain S., then a resident of Bagdad, and commanding the river gunboat at the service of the British Consul General in that city, steamed up the river in the aforesaid gunboat, returning with several European friends and residents of Bagdad from a hunting expedition near Bassorah. They had their horses on board, and stopped at the fuel station, to which I have before referred, when the Captain's horse, a splendid charger, becoming startled, jumped ashore. Elated at his temporary liberty, he cantered away and disappeared in the tall grass. Search was made for him several hours, but in vain night came on, and they were obliged to give it up; the steamer could not be detained any longer, wherefore; orders were left

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with the Arab at the station to send the horse, if found alive, to Bagdad, without delay. During the night the steamer ran upon a sand bank, so that when she got off again in the morning she had made but little headway. About sunrise, the attention of those on board was attracted by a loud rustling noise is the tall grass along the banks. What was their astonishment, when, shortly after, they saw a white horse, which they at once recognized as that of Captain S——, crashing through the thicket at full speed, dripping with perspiration, and neighing lustily at the welcome sight of the steamer. But the noble animal was closely pursued by a huge lion, which came thundering after him with prodigious leaps, his tongue hanging out of his widely open mouth, his face and powerful chest covered with blood; thus the wild chase continued, till they came up with the steamer, which approached closer to the shore, and fired one of her guns. Startled by the sudden flash of fire and loud report, the baffled lion gave up the chase, and disappeared in the thicket. The noble charger, covered with foam and perspiration, and panting heavily, had evidently had a long race for life; but he almost seemed to have enjoyed it, for whenever his ferocious pursuer came within reach of his heels, the noble steed lashed out with such good will that the lion's head was sadly injured, and his broad chest freely covered with his own blood. Of course, the horse was at once taken on board and properly cared for. He is still alive, and I saw him in Bagdad as the property of Mr. A——, and, though very old now, is still a splendid horse.

The following morning, on rising, we found the right bank of the river, as far as the eye could reach, covered with immense herds of camels of every size and color, all belonging to the Bedouins of the Montefik

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tribe, who inhabit the whole of the extensive territory of lower Mesopotamia, to the right of the river Tigris, and north of the desert El Hammad, or El Dahna. They number over eighty thousand men, women and children, and possess over a hundred thousand camels, more than forty thousand horses, and innumerable cows, sheep, goats, etc. They lead, as the word "Bedouin" implies, a nomadic life, living all the year round in large tents, made invariably of coarse, black cloth of sheep's wool or goat's hair, and supported by poles. Owing to the scarcity of good grass on the parched flats of Mesopotamia, they have to travel round the country with their immense herds, as they can only remain in one place till all the grass is eaten by their live stock, when they have to move on in search of a new place, so that they are hardly to be met with in one spot for longer than a fortnight. Each of the Bedouin tribes is subdivided into several smaller tribes, each of which travel in a different direction in search of food and drink for their herds. A more lively and interesting scene than a settling Bedouin tribe can scarcely be seen by a traveler, and the noisy bustle invariably recalls the patriarchal and nomadic life depicted in the Bible, as led by Abraham, Lot, Isaac, Esau, Jacob, etc., etc., who were all nomads, or Bedouins. The life of the wild Bedouins of our day is, in many respects, exactly like that led by our ancesters spoken of in the Bible.

Far away on the barren plain, you see the immense caravan slowly moving toward the river, the banks of which, owing to the moisture of the earth, are always more or less covered with verdure, even during the hot season, when every vestige of vegetation has been parched and burned up in the desert. Like a mammoth snake, winding its gigantic body slowly but

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steadily along the endless flat, the huge train draws nearer and nearer, so that its head can be clearly distinguished, in spite of the vibrating atmosphere on the plains. Clouds of dust are raised by a calvacade of wild, dark-featured horsemen, wrapped in brown and white striped mantles, and their gaudy-tasseled head muffler can be seen wildly fluttering in the wind, their swords, daggers and immensely long guns flashing like lightning in the sun, while thousands of bright spear-heads glitter like stars at every motion of the dashing horsemen. Every now and then you can see some twenty or thirty riders issue from the ranks of the nearer and nearer approaching calvacade, and, with a short, exhilarating yell, they dash away from the bulk of the caravan, with the speed of gazelles, clearing ditches, stones and bushes with marvellous grace and facility, all the time brandishing in playful, yet wild and war-like manner, their bright, curved swords, and whirling their glittering spears and guns over their heads. Their headlong career is directed toward yonder sand-hills, on the crest of which you will presently see them canter leisurely along, performing the duties of scouts, while another party, from a different direction, dash in a similar manner toward the slowly-moving column to make their report, riding as hard as their panting steeds can carry them, never slackening rein till perhaps ten yards from the main corps, when, as if by enchantment, the dashing riders stop their foaming horses as suddenly as if they had been struck dead by lightning. As this wild cavalry draws nearer, you may observe that it is headed and commanded by an old, but still dashing horseman, with long flowing silver beard, moustache and hair, deep set eyes, black as night, and keen as those of the eagle. Add to this the superiority of his equipment, the richness of his costume,

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and it will not be difficult for you to recognize in this man the "Sheik," or chief of the tribe. See how the rest of the horsemen keep at a respectful distance behind him, and how their swarthy faces all turn toward him, as he points to a green spot on the river bank, indicating by this gesture that he has selected this place for their temporary camping ground.

On their arrival at the spot, all jump simultaneously from their panting steeds; the chief alone remains in the saddle, surveying the locality, while his men proceed to picket their horses, either by tying them to their long lances stuck vertically in the ground, or by fettering them with a pair of privately locked iron shackles. As soon as the horses are secured, most of the men proceed at once to the river, where after washing their face, hands, and feet, they kneel down and drink copious draughts of water. By and by the camels move noiselessly up, raising their sagacious heads, and gazing wonderingly round, with their large, soft, hazel eyes, as they approach the river. Foremost among them come those which convey the wives of the Sheik, of which, like a good Moslem, he has from one to four. Almost every man of the tribe has one or more wives, the number being regulated by his ability to support them. The wives of the Sheik are, like himself, easily recognized, even at some distance, by the tall, beautiful camels which they bestride, by their richly decorated saddles, by the superior quality of the dresses they wear, and the profusion of jewelry with which they generally adorn their persons, particularly the Naswan, the Sheik's first or head wife, who wears beside other ornaments, a whole collection of old Persian, Arabian, Turkish, Egyptian, and Indian gold coins joined together in such a manner that they look like the scales of a fish, or like a coat of mail, in

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the form of a cap or helmet, which they wear on their heads. I once took one of these scaly head ornaments in my hand to feel its weight, which was over four pounds. I often wondered how a human being could ride all day beneath the Arabian sun with such a bonnet on without being smitten dead by sun stroke or brain fever, but the Bedouin women do not even suffer headache from wearing it. Immediately behind the Sheik's family follow the wives and children of the rest of the tribe, everybody, of course, mounted on camels, the married women carrying their babies in a kind of small sheet on their backs in the way soldiers carry their haversacks.

The marriageable girls also bestride camels; sometimes two or even three of them ride on the same animal, more clinging to than sitting on its back, holding themselves fast by the wool or hair on the back of the beast, evidently enjoyiug this sort of ride more for the sake of company than for comfort, as the camel's saddle is intended for one person only. The young folks are singing, laughing and chattering in such a way that it is quite cheerful to hear them, while the married women try their best to keep their temper with the screaming, squealing babies molested by the clouds of flies crawling all over the faces of the poor creatures, who are nearly choked with dust. Behind the camels which carry the people, come innumerable animals of the same species carrying pack saddles on their humps, to which are lashed tent poles, tent covers, pillows, blankets, hencoops, pigeon cages, leather buckets, tooloochs (waterskins), straw mats, carpets, corn-grinding stones, calabashes, tools, cooking utensils, water jugs, provisions, etc., and driven by armed men on horseback. In this department of the caravan you may see the camel in every state of existence, from the little trembling crea-

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ture born only a few hours ago, up to the shaky limping, half-blind animal, ready to break down from sheer old age. After the beasts of burden appear a lot of half-naked boys and old men mounted on the bare backs of brood mares, which are still nursing the young colts, and must threfore be gently treated; this troop drive before them an immense herd of cows, calves, oxen, donkeys, sheep, and goats, guarded on all sides by over two hundred big, shaggy, savage-looking curs, or Bedouin dogs. The latter are assisted in this task by hundreds of ragged or stark-naked boys riding on bare-backed donkeys, every one of these hopeful sons of the desert carrying a lame dog, a new-born kitten, or lamb in his lap. The tail of the caravan is finally made up by another strong force of mounted men, armed to the teeth; their duty consists in protecting the caravan in the rear, and picking up occasional stragglers. To the right and left of the long caravan, at distances varying from two hundred to two thousand yards, are numerous scouts, of course, all mounted, who keep a good look-out, especially when they know other tribes to be encamped in the neighborhood. Bedouin tribes, though not always at war with each other, are not at all scrupulous about stealing their neighbors' live stock when opportunity offers, and cattle thefts are the usual cause of their brawls.

The Montefik Bedouins are fond of kidnapping cattle from the Beni-Lam Bedouins, who occupy the northeastern border of the Tigris, and nearly the whole of the Lorian desert; the Aneri Bedouins of Upper Mesopotamia, occupying the territory south of the Euphrates, delight in lifting cattle among the Shammir Bedouins north of the Euphrates and *vice versa*. As soon as the whole caravan has arrived on the territory selected by the Sheik, all hands turn to unloading the

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beasts of burden. This being done, the Sheik, by virtue of his prerogative, points out where he wishes his own tent, and those of his family to be pitched indiscriminately all round the tents of the chief, which latter invariably form the centre of the canvas city. A space at least twenty yards broad all round the Sheik's main tent is left unoccupied, and serves as the public meeting ground of the men, who generally congregate there morning and evening to smoke their pipes, and talk over their affairs, some standing or walking, others squatting on the ground, cross-legged in the Oriental fashion, or half reclining on straw mats, skins, or carpets. The tents of all the Bedouin tribes are invariably made of coarse black or brown cloth, manufactured by the women from sheep's wool or goat's hair, which cloth, though almost transparent, is water-proof, and very elastic. The tents are supported by poles, and fixed to the ground by wooden pins and ropes made of goat's hair. The floor or ground is covered by straw mats, skins, or carpets, according to the means of the occupants. The beds are spread by the women at sunset, and rolled up and stowed away again in a corner at sunrise. Whoever enters the tent, even its owner himself, slips off his shoes at the entrance. Europeans and Americans only are exempted from following this observance; but Arabs consider it mark of great respect paid them, if the European or American traveller will comply with this Oriental custom. It vastly increases their proverbial hospitality, so much so, that a stranger will find it much to his advantage to fulfil this trifling act of courtesy. The horses are invariably picketed at the entrance of their owner's tent, so that he always has them in sight. At nightfall the Bedouin puts private iron shackles on his best horses, the key of which he alone possesses. In some of the wilder tribes, each man

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keeps one of his horses constantly saddled, ready for an emergency. The Bedouin horses are almost without exception remarkably quiet and good tempered, so much so that I have seen them lying down on the sand and basking in the sun, while a couple of little stark naked Bedouin imps, scarcely two years old, crawled and climbed all over their bodies, pulling their tails, ears and manes, and even creeping between their legs with perfect impunity. The herds of camels and cattle are never brought into the camp, but at night are gathered in the neighborhood, and carefully guarded by armed watchmen and numerous dogs, who give instant alarm on the slightest approach of danger. The Bedouins as a rule live to a great age. It is not at all uncommon to see persons among them much over a hundred yers old, the pure air of the desert, the hot, but stable temperature, their constant outdoors exercise, and above all their sober, temperate habits, contribute to longevity.

It took the steamer fully two hours to pass the camp of the above mentioned Montefik Bedouins. We steamed for a considerable time up the river, surrounded on the right and left by endless barren flats which appeared to be totally uninhabited, and even destitute of animal life, until we reached Seroot al Cantāra, a small abandoned Turkish fort with mud walls fast crumbling to pieces, and situated on the right river bank. Not the slightest mark of vegetation is visible round this fort as far as the eye can reach, so that the troops formerly stationed at this dismal place must have been obliged to get all their provisions from Koot al Amāra, a village sixty miles higher up the river. Seroot al Cantāra is situated near the spot where Alexander, King of Macedonia, the great conqueror, crossed the Tigris with his immense army, intent upon invading India, B. C. 330;

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some few remains of the bridge of bricks, that he built for the purpose, are still plainly visible on both banks. About fifteen miles above Seroot al Cantāra, the Tigris is joined on the left bank by a tributary called Nahr Mendeli, Congetoon, or Badrâi, names given to the same river by different tribes inhabiting the Loorian desert, which stretches with the river Tigris as its South-western, and the mountain range of Pushti Kooh as its North-eastern limit, from the dismal Samargha swamps to far beyond Bagdad, measuring at least three hundred miles in length, andabout sixty miles in breadth, of the Nahr Mendeli, only the source, which lies in the mountain chain forming the South-west frontier of Persia, and the lower part of the river are as yet known to geographers, the remainder running through a territory not yet explored by civilized men, owing to the exceedingly hostile disposition evinced by the savage natives toward all intruders. The inhabitants of this desolate territory are the Beni Lam Bedouins, who occupy it all along the Tigris, from Bagdad down to Korna; the Abladani Bedouins, inhabiting the centre of the Loorian desert, and the terrible Hamawend, a tribe of uncertain nationality, of half Arab, half Persian descent, roaming about the Nahr Mendeli, on the hilly territory between the river and the mountains of the Persian frontier. This last mentioned tribe is notorious throughout Mesopotamia for its ferocity and daring, and the fiendish yells of the marauding Hamawend strike terror and dismay into every caravan, no matter how strong it may be; for in these outlaws are combined the fighting propensity of the bull dog, the ferocity of the tiger, the agility of the monkey, and the cunning of the fox They will never leave off dodging, and harassing a caravan they have once "spotted," till they secure their prey; woe to that incautious caravan which

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does not keep a good lookout at night; woe to the hapless stragglers, who chance to fall behind the main body, or to lose their way; their doom is sealed, for before they are aware, the wily Hamawend, the most expert horsemen in the world, will be upon them, and never stop in the work of slaughter, till neither man, woman nor child is left to tell the tale. They were never known to show mercy, and they never ask for it; in fact a more dangerous set of desperadoes cannot be found in the world. Numerous highly romantic, but bloody stories are told by the natives of Mesopotamia of the daring, ferocity, and cunning of the dreaded Hamawend, who obedient to the dictates of their lawless vocation will not encumber themselves with cattle, nor keep any animals but horses and dogs. Their tents are composed of two woolen blankets, or felt covers, and two sticks; each tent does not weigh above ten pounds, and may be pitched and struck in two minutes. The whole of this household furniture consists of a copper cooking pot, a water skin or bag, and a straw mat. Men, women and children are almost continually mounted on horseback, and scarcely ever live for more than two days in the same locality. All the booty made in their depredations is disposed of by some of the tribe sent in disguise to Persia or to Upper Mesopotamia. They are invincible, for no army can be sent against them into the barren desert, of which they alone know the advantages, and points of access, and by careful manœuvoring could lead to certain destruction any force that might be sent against then; luckily for mankind they are not numerous and must soon become extinct. They are not Mohammedans, like the Arabs and Persians, but "Yeridies," or worshippers of the devil.

A little above the confluence of the Nahr Mendeli with the Tigris, and situated on the right river bank,

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lies the village of Mendelia, a wretched little place, consisting of about twenty flat-roofed mud huts and some Bedouin tents, but notorious for its deadly scorpions, the sting of which is said by the Arabs to be certain death, unless the part poisoned be cut or burned out instantly. They are of the same shape as other scorpions, but smaller, not measuring more than two inches in length, of a grayish color, and live in old walls and holes in the ground. At sunset we arrived at Koot al Amāra, an Arab village of considerable importance, governed by a Sheik, and situated on the right bank of the Tigris, as indeed have been all the villages we have passed since leaving Hadidsha, below Korna, a distance of nearly three hundred miles. Koot al Amāra is the third fuel station of the steamer, and only important to Bagdad as a market for sheep's wool, which the Beni Lam Bedouins bring here for sale. A little below the village the Tigris divides into two branches; the right one is the Tigris proper, the left is the Shatt al Hâïh, which flows almost due south and falls into the Euphrates at the village of Alfaria. From Koot al Amāra to Bagdad, in a straight line, the distance is only about one hundred miles; but by the river it is over two hundred miles, owing to its extreme sinuosity, some of its curves measuring almost twenty miles, while the one distance in a straight line is hardly two miles.

The next morning we reached Shamamia, also called Azizia. This village is situated on the left side of the river, and though not large is nevertheless of some importance to Bagdad merchants, and enjoys the benefits of a small Bazaar, where the Bedouins buy their necessities and luxuries. In the afternoon, while steaming up the river, we saw numerous herds of wild pigs scampering about the banks, and several times saw a number of them

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swimming across the river; we shot one of them, but it sank instantly, so that we could not procure it, and it was as well that we did lose it, for if we had tried to haul it on board we should have had a serious row with the captain, and a still more serious one with our Moslem and Hebrew fellow passengers. The captain had given us notice to this effect before we fired, assuring us that he would never be able to obtain another Mohammedan passenger as long as the steamer floated, if it were known that a pig had ever been brought on board. This aversion of Jews and Moslems to the pig is so intense that in many of the places in the Orient, hardly any crops can be raised owing to the ravages of immense numbers of wild pigs, which the natives refuse to kill, or even to come in contact with, from religious motives. Rather than pollute themselves by touching one of these animals they will give up agriculture, and even leave the territory. The greater part of the inhabitants of Asia abhor the pig, particularly, Hebrews, Hindoos, and Moslems, partly for religious and partly for sanitary reasons.

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VIII.

On Foot—Ruins of Taak Kesra—A Shot—Deafness—Sand Grouse—Wonderful Garden—Archway—History—Bagging Partridges—Bagdad in Sight.

About thirty miles from Azizia, on the right bank, is the little Arab village of Tuaya, where the river makes an immense bend of nearly twelve miles in circuit; here most of our passengers were temporarily set on shore, in consequence of the steamer having run fast on a sandbank. Leaving the crew to extricate the boat as best they could, we proceeded at once to walk across the narrow strip of land three miles broad. My two European travelling companions and myself, who thought this a fine opportunity to get some game, went ashore also in the boats, and bagged during our stroll across the peninsula many brace of fine partridges and two hares; we also started several wild pigs, but did not molest them. We reached the other side of the little peninsula just before sunset, and nearly an hour in advance of the steamer, which had been got off without much difficulty. The steamer could make very little headway during the night owing to the numerous sand banks in this part of the extremely sinuous river. She ran on them several times, in spite of all precautions, so that at daybreak we found ourselves just opposite the gray and majestic ruins of "Taak Kesra," as the Arabs call them, at anchor, for the purpose of taking in fuel. The Captian told us that the steamer would not be off again for two hours, so we availed ourselves of the opportunity to inspect the ruins, which are less than two miles distant from the left bank of the river. A brisk walk in the refreshing early morning air soon

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brought us to them. We were struck with wonder at the magnificent and gigantic building, which is really one of the grandest and most majestic ruins in the Orient, ranking, in my estimation, but little below those of Baalbec, about fifty miles northeast of Beyrout, or those of Palmyra, or Tadmor in the desert about one hundred and fifty miles northeast of Damascus, both of world wide fame. The huge building known as "Taak Kesra" is a strong quadrangular structure composed of brick and mortar, the latter of which has by dint of time become entirely petrified, and adheres so tenaciously to the bricks that it is almost impossible to separate them. The bricks are considerably smaller than the huge ones found in Babylon, and measure only about one foot square by three or four inches in thickness; they are composed of yellowish clay, but not covered with inscriptions like those of Babylon. In quality they are hardly inferior to the latter, and the Arabs of the neighborhood, aware of their great superiority to modern bricks, are constantly engaged in detaching, and selling them in Bagdad, to blacksmiths, bakers, and cooks, to build their stoves, furnaces, and chimneys, as these bricks will stand any amount of heat, and are almost indestructible. It is a great pity that the natives should be aware of the value of these bricks, as by detaching them, they much impair the appearance of the noble edifice, and hasten its ruin, when it might otherwise successfully brave the tooth of time for another millenium. The approximative dimensions of "Taak Kesra" are: width of front, three hundred feet, depth, two hundred feet, height, one hundred and twenty feet, and the thickness of the walls throughout is from six to ten feet. A gigantic archway in the centre of the front, and running down through the middle of the entire building, forms the entrance, but

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does not pierce the back walls, a small doorway, measuring about five feet in width by nine in height, forming the only means of egress in the rear. This beautiful archway is close on eighty feet in width, two hundred in length, and one hundred feet in height. Its sides are now quite plain, and of a gray color, but probably were originally decorated. The front of the building strongly resembles a huge palace, owing to four or five rows of niches, bearing the appearance of so many large windows, which have been bricked up, and make it look several stories high. There is however nothing to indicate any apartments, or chambers, elevated above the ground, though there may have been many of them in former times, to judge from the immense quantity of debris strewed on the ground. In the left front corners of the building, to the right of the entrance through the porch, is a little narrow gateway, leading from the main gallery or archway into a square room, which being destitute of windows, or any openings in the wall, except the doorway, is exceedingly dark, and filled with a cold, grave like atmosphere, chilling the very bones of the visitors. Being desirous of seeing the interior of the room, we lighted a pile of dry grass at the entrance, the glare of which enabled us to see that the room was large, empty, and nicely vaulted, but infested with snakes, scorpions and bats, which were considerably startled by our unexpected visit and illumination, especially the bats, which flitted in large numbers round our heads. In order to keep them at a more respectful distance, I fired a shot, the effects of which I shall never forget in my life; for Father M., one of my Europeans travelling companions, and two Arabs, who had accompanied us from the steamer, dropped as suddenly as if they had been struck by lightning, and friend P. looked ghastly pale, and was unable to speak.

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For a moment I was horribly wretched, fearing that I had shot them, though I could not imagine how, for they stood behind me; I examined my gun to see if it had burst; no, that was all right. Just as I was bending down to examine the supposed lifeless bodies, up they all jumped, as if stung by scorpions, and rushed out of the gloomy abode, to my intense relief, as it was certainly the most convincing proof that they were not dead; but this only served to puzzle me the more. Turning to Signor P., I saw him gesticulating violently, and opening and shutting his mouth, but could not hear him say a word. I was afraid my friend had lost his voice, and in dismay hastened from the fatal chamber. Arrived in the open air, I was addressed by the trio of whom I had fancied myself the murderer. I saw their gestures, and the motions of their mouths, but but could not hear a word. Oh, horror! I found that I was deaf as a post; luckily this only lasted about ten minutes, when my sense of hearing gradually returned. Signor P. had experienced the same effect as myself; the cause is easily explained. The report of the gun in that close room, filled with the heavy atmosphere, produced such a tremendous concussion of the air, that it knocked some of the party completely over, and temporarily deprived P. and myself, who were probably less nervous, of our sense of hearing, producing for a considerable time a loud, ringing noise in our ears.

In many places in the building large logs protruded from the dilapidated walls. This wood, though undoubtedly much over a thousand years old, is still well preserved. It seems to be cedar, as a strong odor still emanates from it like that from the cedars of Lebanon. It is also of the same reddish color. A large triangular fissure, about twenty feet wide, nearly on the top of the gigantic archway, admits now daylight from

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above, and greatly impairs the noble appearance of the building, otherwise well preserved, and remarkably imposing. The Arabs living in the neighborhood assert that this fissure was caused by a terrific stroke of lightning about sixty years ago, of such tremendous force that it not only knocked a fearfully large hole through the ten feet thick ceiling, but literally split the whole mammoth building from the top to its very foundation. Owing to this fissure, it is now not very difficult to climb on the outside to the top of the venerable ruins, and magnificent views enjoyed from this elevated position amply repays the visitor for the trouble of the ascent. I climbed the ruins with my travelling companions, and the Arabs before referred to, a little before sunrise, and the prospect was truly marvellous. Before us, over the boundless barren flats of the Loorian desert, rose majestically the fiery orb of day, throwing with his first dazzling rays a kind of copper-colored hue on the imposing, weather beaten front of the wonderful representative of ancient architecture; while the endless plains, strewed with the debris of the two famous cities, Seleucia and Ctesiphon, were still clad in the dim haze of early dawn, and wrapped in mysterious grave-like silence, broken occasionally by the faint parting howl of some distant jackal retiring unwillingly to his lair before the bright messenger of day, or at intervals by the scarce audible shriek of a flock of water-fowl, in the direction of the river, startled from their slumber by the mingled noise of rattling chains and human voices on board the steamer. Slowly, but steadily, the glorious life-giving orb rose higher and higher, enlivening the silent river, and transforming with marvellous speed its dull waters into an interminable stream of liquid silver of dazzling brilliancy, so that with its innumerable graceful curves, the broad river closely resembled a

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mammoth silver snake winding its scaly body over the endless plain. By and by the whole country rejoiced in broad daylight, the hawks and falcons, hidden during the night in the crevices of the gigantic walls of Taak Kesra, issued forth, with a sharp wild shriek, in search of prey. The wild pigeons and turtle doves assembled in numbers on the cupola, and surrounding walls of a small mosque, situated about three hundred yards to the left of the ruins, cooing joyously, and expanding their wings in the sunshine, while immense clouds, composed of thousands of the sand-grouse, alighted on the sandy plains around, in search of their scanty food. Sand-grouse or ganga, or still more correctly termed the pin-tailed sand-grouse (Pterocles arenarius). This bird is of migratory habits, and is met with everywhere in the arid sandy regions of northern Africa and western Asia, as far north as the Black Sea, soaring in rapid flight, and in such vast numbers as to resemble an immense cloud sweeping over the barren plains. Alighting from time to time for rest and food, they never settle on trees, bushes or grassy spots; but invariably on the barren, sandy ground, so that they are killed in countless numbers by prowling jackals, when they have settled for the night. The "Pin-tailed sand-grouse" of Mesopotamia, however, must not be confounded with the Banded Sand-grouse (Pterocles setarius), which is rarely found as far south as Mesopotamia, though extremely abundant on the steppes of southern Russia.

About two mile in front of the ruins of Taak Kesra, which occupy the centre of the vast area of ruins of the city of Ctesiphon, spread the huge remains of Soliman Bhag, that is the Garden of Soliman, covering an area of over one thousand acres of land, and situated like Ctesiphon on the left bank of the Tigris. According to the

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traditions of the Arabs, this place was once a wonderful garden, owned by the warlike caliph, Omar I, who one day made a present of it to his slave Soliman or Seliman for valuable services rendered his master in faithfully guarding the harem of the caliph against intruders, while his lord was absent on a campaign against the enemies of his country. But alas! of this wonderful garden, once the delight of Mesopotamia, nothing is now left but part of the gigantic mud walls, now scarcely more than thirty feet high, and about forty feet thick at the base, which formerly surrounded this beautiful spot, now a desert, covered with scanty shrubbery. These walls are slowly crumbling away, so that after the lapse of a few more centuries they willprobably be nearly level with ground.

On the right bank of the river, just opposite the ruins of the city of Ctesiphon, which, by the way, consists merely in a series of huge irregular and barren mounds scattered promiscuously over an area of more than twenty square miles, the visitor espies the vast ruins of ancient Seleucia. The course of the streets of this famous city and the sites of its principal buildings are still clearly discernible by the elevation of the ground along the sides of the ancient thoroughfares, but not a brick, not a stone is now visible on the whole area of the enormous city, which to judge from the extent of its gigantic mud walls, still rising over thirty feet above the ground, must have covered an immense space, which is now a perfect desert. Over the very spot where two thousand years ago magnificent palaces, temples, monuments, and thousands of other stately buildings stood, intersected by innumerable streets teeming with human beings, sneak now the cowardly jackal and horrid hyena, trots the sulky boar, and bounds the graceful

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gazelle, in happy unconsciousness of its former glory. *Sic transit gloria mundi.*

Historical writers differ considerably in regard to the origin of these two cities. Most of them, however, agree that Seleucia owes its origin to Seleucus I (Nicator), one of the chief generals of Alexander of Macedonia, who on the death of that great conqueror, August X, 324 B. C., made himself king of the Syrian empire, comprising the whole of Syria and Mesopotamia. About the year 311 B. C., Seleucia is said to have still been a small village, but it grew so quickly that it soon became the capital of the empire, and as such had over six hundred thousand inhabitants, principally Greeks. The city had a senate of three hundred patricians, Greek laws and institutions, and preserved its original Greek character fathfully throughout its numerous mishaps and vicissitudes. Soon after the death of Seleucus, Babylonia fell into the hands of the Parthians or Persians, who began to build a city on the left bank of the Tigris, just opposite Seleucia, and called it Ctesiphon. At the outbreak of the war between the Romans and the Parthians, 117–114 years before Christ, Ctesiphon is said to have still been a very small city, and to have fallen, together with Seleucia, into the hands of the victorious Romans. Trajanus, then Roman emperor, annexed the conquered territory to his empire. About sixty years after, the Parthians regained their lost territory, and under the patronage of their rulers, Ctesiphon grew so rapidly that it soon successfully rivalled Seleucia, and became, like her sister city, one of the two capitals of the vast Parthian empire. Marcus Aurelius, the Roman emperor, during the second war between the Romans and Parthians, retook the territory, and plundered and entirely destroyed both cities, A. D. 165. Such was the fury of the victorious Romans that three

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hundred thousand of the inhabitants of Seleucia are said to have perished during the capture and devastation of that city. Seleucia never rose again from its ruins, but Ctesiphon was immediately rebuilt by the Parthians, who held it only thirty-three years, when it again fell into the hands of the Romans, during the reign of Septimus Severus, and was once more leveled to the ground, A. D. 198. Again it rose, Phœnix-like, from its ashes; but though still figuring as the capital of the Parthian empire it never recovered its former size and grandeur, but relapsed so rapidly that the Roman emperor, Julianus, who appeared A. D. 362, with an army of 65,000 men before Ctesiphon, found only a suburb left of the famous capital of Parthia, which about four centuries previously ranked amongst the largest and most magnificent cities of the then known world.

The city had assumed the Assyrian name of "Coche,"* Assyrian language and customs, whilst Greek art and science, which used to flourish there, had entirely disappeared, and the former capital of the vast Parthian empire dwindled into utter oblivion for a period of nearly three centuries.

Mohamed died A. D. 632 (the tenth year of the Mohammedan era), and in obedience to his bidding, his representatives, the caliphs, at once began to spread the Islam (Mohammedan) creed with fire and sword all over Arabia and Mesopotamia. In the beginning of the year 637 the Caliph, Omar I, at the head of an army of disciples of Mohamed, took possession of Ctesiphon, or Coche, and gave the place the Arabic name of El Madain, by which the ruins of Ctesiphon are known among the Arabs to this day. The religiously inspired

* The "ch" pronounced gutturally, as in the Scotch word "loch" (lake).

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Moslems henceforth made El Madain their headquarters, whence they subsequently spread the Islam all over Persia and Western India. During the reign of the above-mentioned caliph, one of their camps near the mouth of Shatt al Arab gave the origin of the city of Bassorah.

The total destruction of Ctesiphon probably took place A. D. 1258, when the wild Mongolian hordes under their ferocious leader, Holagu, invaded the whole of western Asia, devastating Bagdad and, very likely, Ctesiphon. Taak Kesra, the magnificent ruin described as now forming the chief attraction of Ctesiphon, was probably too strongly built for the devastating Mongols to level it with the ground, though there is no doubt that they ransacked and partly destroyed it, as there are evidences that the building is not now complete, having apparently formerly been much higher. The ground is strewed with debris of brick, and part of the walls are greatly damaged; beside, there are indications that several outbuildings were formerly connected with the main edifice, which are not now to be found. The opinions of archæologists who have visited the ruins vary considerably as to the age and character of this building. Some assert that it is of Greek origin, dating as far back as B. C. 300, and that it was used as a hall of assembly; others declare it the work of the Romans, built during the reign of Trajanus as a palace for the governor of the colony. Others, again, believe it to be of Parthian architecture, and to have served either as a place of worship, or as a palace of the Parthian kings of the second century of the Christian era, while others still ascribe it to one of the caliphs, probably Omar I, who, as previously stated, is said to have owned and presented to his slave the beautiful garden known to posterity as Soliman Bhag.

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M. G. Lejean, a French traveller and archæologist of high merit, with whom I have the honor to be personally acquainted, and who traversed Mesopotamia about the same time I did, ascribes the construction of Taak Kesra to the Sassanid Kesra, or Khusru, or Kosroes I, better known under the name of Noosheerwan the Just, ruler of Persia (A. D. 531–579); and its destruction, to the Caliph Giaffar al Mansoor (Taffar al Mansoor), the founder of Bagdad (about the year A. D. 762).

During my stay in Bagdad I often visited these ruins, so full of historical interest, for the sake of sport; but being always on horseback with my rifle on my shoulder, and accompanied by friends who did not care about digging for antiques, I never found any object of real value. I have, however, often seen Arabs there, searching and digging for curiosities, which they readily find purchasers for, sometimes at exorbitant prices if they bring them to Bagdad, which is not more than twenty miles farther up the river, and from the extreme flatness of the country can easily be seen in the morning, when the atmosphere is clear, from the summit of the solitary ruins of Taak Kesra.

While standing one morning on this elevated spot, we were surprised by a wonderful phenomenon of exquisite perfection, although by no means a novelty to me, having often beheld similar scenes in my travels through Egypt, India and South Africa. I speak of the Fata Morgana, a marvellous meteor visible only in the desert, or in places where the atmosphere is light and pure. As minute a description of the Fata Morgana in this particular instance as I am able to give may not be uninteresting. On reaching the top of the ruins, we were all simultaneously struck with the remarkable character of the atmosphere of this early morning,

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toward the north-west, which appeared to be so pure, that hills, bushes, walls, etc., which could not be less than two miles distant, seemed so near that we fancied a stone thrown in that direction might reach them, or at least a shot from a revolver certainly would. By and by, as the sun rose above the horizon, there appeared on the extreme border of the latter, a scarcely perceptible light slate colored haze, which grew more and more distinct, when wonderfully, to us, it turned by degrees into most magnificent scenery, and we saw before us a large and beautiful lake, with a series of lovely little bays and creeks, the smooth and silvery waters of which seemed so clear that we almost fancied we could see the fish living in its depths. The borders of the lake were covered with beautifully fresh green grass, and numerous clusters of date trees, of tall and slender growth, apparently bending beneath their weight of fruit, and casting their graceful shadow over the limpid mirror, into which, like Narcissus of old, they gazed so lovingly. The ruins of several magnificent palaces of ancient architecture, apparently of enormous size, with numerous stately columns, and bold arches, graced the borders of the lake, and were reflected with really wonderful accuracy by the silver sheet in front of them. An endless caravan moved slowly toward the fairy-like scenery of the lake, the measured stately gait of the camels, the rocking motion of the Maherries or camel drivers, as they sat on the humps of the slowly advancing animals, even the long lances which the men bore, were as distinctly visible, and as strangely natural, as if the whole of this fairy-like scenery were a reality, and the men and beasts composing the caravan real flesh and blood, and not mere phantoms. With unfeigned wonder, and a thrilling recognition in our hearts of the sublime powers of nature and its Almighty Creator,

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we gazed at the enchanting phenomenon, until, alas! the scenery grew fainter and fainter. First the side border of the lake disappeared, so that for awhile the landscape on the other side appeared as if floating between heaven and earth, and the caravan seemed moving in the air. Dimmer and more dim they became; first, the desert in the background, from which the caravan seemed to be approaching toward the inviting green borders of the silvery lake; then the caravan vanished, first, the camels still far away; then those in the centre, and finally the leaders; then column after column of the ruined palaces faded away; then the trees another minute, and the lake itself melted away in the slightly vibration, but nevertheless exceedingly transparent atmosphere, and the magnificent panorama was gone. Breathing heavily, we turned for the first time to each other, hardly finding words to express our admiration of the beautiful vision we had enjoyed.

It is not difficult to believe the many stories current among the Bedouins that whole caravans, maddened by the pangs of thirst, have been known to deviate from their right path to seek relief in the crystal waters of such a phantom lake, or to rest and feed in the enchanting shade of those imaginary date tree oases. The Bedouins assert that even the camels themselves are often deceived by the fatal Fata Morgana, and sometimes when suffering very much from thirst cannot be prevented from rushing straight toward the phantom lake, never slackening their speed until they drop dead from thrist and exhaustion. The Fata Morgana is a phenomenon most common, though by no means of every day occurrence on the boundless sand ocean of the Sahara in North Africa, all over Egypt, Arabia, Southern Mesopotamia, the Kalahari desert in South Africa, etc.; but especially in the district east of

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Bagdad which forms a part of the Loorian desert. It is mostly visible in the morning about or soon after sunrise, and sometimes, though very seldom, in the evening about or soon after sunset; at least I never noticed it any other time.

Highly satisfied with the result of our visit to this interesting spot, we returned to the steamer not to leave her again till we should arrive in Bagdad, which city we hoped to reach before sunset of that day. On our way to the river, a distance of not more than half an hour's walk, we bagged twenty-eight beautiful black and white dotted partridges, indigenous only to the plains of Mesopotamia; and so plentiful are they in the low shrubbery round Ctesiphon and Seleucia, that it is impossible to advance one hundred yards without startling some of them. The Arabs, who are all more or less very bad shots with their inferior guns at moving game, cannot kill them while flying or running; but they dig deep holes in the sandy banks of the river where they hide and fire at the partridges all day long as the birds issue from the shrubbery on their way to the river's edge to quench their thirst. In this way they kill them by cart-loads and bring them to Bagdad, where they sell for about ten paras, equal to one cent apiece; they are excellent eating, their flesh being whiter and superior in flavor to that of chicken. In the same way they kill the gazelles, which, however, only come to drink after nightfall; but the wily Arab, blessed with wonderful patience, hardly ever lies in wait for them in vain. He usually brings his spoils to town, where he sells the whole animal, often weighing from thirty to fifty pounds, for from ten to twenty Turkish piastres (forty to eighty cents, American money). The flesh of the gazelle, particularly the young one, when properly prepared, is exceedingly tender and

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savory, and in my estimation is superior to any venison I ever tasted.

On our return to the boat we found our Asiatic passengers busily engaged in getting their goods and chattels ready to leave the steamer as soon as she arrived at Bagdad. Continuing our route up the river we observed that both banks began to appear more densely populated as we drew nearer to the capital, the great centre of Lower Mesopotamia. An hour after leaving Ctesiphon, we passed the high, steep banks of Kassēba, on the left side of the river, where a large caravan, coming from the Loorian desert, had encamped during the night, and was now preparing to continue its journey toward Bagdad. In another hour we arrived at the mouth of the Diyāla, a pretty large river, which has its origin in the mountains of southern Persia, and after crossing the north-western frontier of the Loorian desert, joins the Dījeleh, or Tigris, about ten miles below Bagdad. Here we passed one of the two Turkish Government steamers plying on the river bound for Bassorah, run high and dry upon a sand bank. The lazy Turkish crew were not exerting themselves in the least to get her off again, but snugly seated in the shade of the awnings they quietly smoked their pipes, apparently desirous of giving the steamer a chance to get herself off. An hour later brought us round a couple of very tortuous bends of the river to Carāra, a little village of mud huts on the left bank, about six miles by the river, but only two miles by land from the gates of Bagdad.

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IX.

SOJOURN IN BAGDAD.

Appearance—Oriental Architecture—Natural Scenery—Landing—Passing Duty—Bribery—Mohammedanism—Walls and Ditch—Fortifications—Governor's Palace—Namyk Pasha's Carriage—Moving the Walls—Narrow Streets—The Harem—Guarding the Inmates—Masques.

From Carara upwards the river flows almost in a straight line, which enabled us to see Bagdad, the far-famed city of the caliphs, Bagdad of the Arabian Nights, Bagdad, in the glorious times of Haroun al Raschid, the caliph, perhaps the queen of the cities of the globe. There she lies sadly altered, it is true, since the days of that famous ruler, immortalized by history, song, and romance, still lovely, mysterious, and therefore full of interest to the visitor; there she lies, open like a mammoth book to tell her own story. Extending far away, over both banks of the river, and beautifully ensconced in a gigantic, luxuriant carpet of perpetually green gardens, filled with lovely blossoms of myriads of evergreen, jasmine bushes, rose bushes, orange, lemon, peach, and pomegranate trees, and numberless other trees, bushes, and shrubs, which emit, especially at morning and evening, the most delicious perfumes. The gardens and houses along the river are overtopped by an endless forest of stately date trees, the tall and slender trunks of which are almost breaking beneath the weight of the sweet golden fruit, while their noble evergreen crowns cast a delightful shade over the ground beneath. The high, steep banks of the river are covered with innumerable buildings of

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Oriental architecture, some of which, especially those on the left bank of the river, are of considerable size and imposing appearance when seen from afar. Prominent among these are the high, slender minarets, and vast mosques, whose cupolas tower far above all other buildings of the city, even above the tallest date trees. These cupolas are all built of highly glazed brick, in black, blue, white, and green colors, placed in Mosaic style, and glittering with dazzling brightness in the sun, which renders them visible at a great distance. The top of the cupola is mounted with a richly gilt crescent, the symbol of the Islam or Mohammedan faith, just as the cross is the symbol of Christianity. This crescent surmounts every minaret, mosque, and Moslem mausoleum, and dazzles the eye like a bright star far over the country, forming with the tall minarets, and the huge cupolas of the mosques, one of the chief features in the outward aspect of a Mohammedan town, and of Bagdad especially. As we steamed up the river from Carara to Bagdad, surrounded by this beautiful scenery, the conviction forced itself upon me that in all the world there is hardly a city that can equal Bagdad in the lovliness of its scenery, when viewed from a steamer ascending the river. A short run of an hour brought the steamer to her anchorage opposite the Custom House, on the left bank, just below the clumsy pontoon bridge across the river. The landing place, as well as the pontoon, was crowded with people of all nations and vocations, gaudily dressed in their national costume; Turkish soldiers, noisy Jews, lively Armenians, lazy and sleepy looking Koords, or natives of Koordistan, ragged Bedouins, carefully veiled women, half naked children, and last but not least, six or seven Europeans, relatives, and friends of Captain H. and myself; these latter naturally receiving us with

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the greatest cordiality. Signor P. thankfully accepted the proffered hospitality of my brother-in-law and remained with us, while Father M., as a Roman Catholic priest, took up his abode with the French missionaries resident in Bagdad.

After about a fortnight's preparations for a visit of several months' duration to the various Bedouin tribes inhabiting the banks of the lower Euphrates, amongst whom he expected to find the required number of faultless, thoroughbred Arab horses, which he was commissioned to procure for the private stables of the Emperor of the French, Signor P. departed for the desert.

As for Father M. and myself, who had agreed to await P's. return to Bagdad, in order to travel in his company to the shores of the Mediterranean, we passed the period of P's. absence from Bagdad most pleasantly in making, with our Bagdad friends, almost daily excursions on horseback for the purpose of getting thoroughly acquainted with the City of the Caliphs and its environs.

Bagdad is the capital and seat of government of the Pashalic, or province of Lower Mesopotamia, or, as the Arabs call it, "Irak Arabi," a province extending over an area of about seventy thousand square miles. In point of size it is the largest province of the Ottoman Empire, but contains only thirteen hundred thousand inhabitants. "Irak Arabi" is governed by a pasha, or governor, who is invested with his high office and the necessary power by the Sultan. The city of Bagdad was commenced in the year of our Lord 762, by the Caliph Giaffar al Mansoor, and said to have been finished in the incredibly short space of four years, and to have attained the greatest splendor under the wise rule of the famous caliph, Haroun al Rashid (Haroun

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the Just), during the middle of the 8th century, when it is said to have numbered two million inhabitants, and to have been the centre of art, science, and commerce of western Asia. Bagdad is reported to have been devastated and leveled to the ground by the Turks, hardly a century after the reign of Haroun al Raschid, since which time it has been repeatedly built and destroyed. Holager, grandson of the terrible Mongol conqueror, Tingis Khan, captured and utterly devastated Bagdad in February, 1258. Timur, or Tamerlane, the conqueror, a Mongol despot still more ferocious than Lingis Khan or Holager, devastated Bagdad in 1392, and celebrated his victory by erecting on the ruins of the hapless city, a pyramid, built of *ninety thousand human heads.* In 1412 Bagdad was again wasted by Kara Yussef, chief of the Turcomans. In the following century Shah Ismael, ruler of Persia, took possession of the city. From that time up to 1638 the Persians and Turks were continually fighting for supremacy in Mesopotamia, till Sultan Amurath 4th, succeeded in taking possession of Bagdad, since which time the Turks have held it. To-day its population hardly exceeds sixty thousand, composed of Turks, Arabs, Persians, Koords, Armenians, Syrians, Africans, and a few East Indians. About forty-five thousand of the inhabitants profess the Mohammedan, twelve thousand the Jewish, and three thousand the Christian religion. Among the latter we may count about twenty European residents. The present city is fortified all round by a wall six miles in circumference, forty feet high, and from six to eight feet thick, built of sun-dried bricks, no stones for building purposes being found within a hundred miles of Bagdad; in fact, the whole of Lower Mesopotamia, from Bagdad to Bassorah, is totally destitute of stone. Outside the walls

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runs a ditch about thirty feet deep, by forty feet broad, which in bygone years must have been filled with water from the river, and may with the walls have been a sufficient protection from invasion by foes armed only with small arms; but at the present time the ditch is dry, and the walls crumbling to pieces, so that in many places a bold rider might succeed in climbing over them even on horseback. The fortifications of the town form a regular octagon, each corner of which is surmounted by a round tower, bearing a couple of old, rusty iron guns, which grin in a dreary manner over the deserted and dilapidated walls beneath. They are guarded by a few sentinels only, in the person of some sleepy looking Turkish soldiers, in dusty and thread-bare uniforms, generally enjoying an undisturbed nap on the shady side of the rickety wooden gun carriages, mounted with guns of such doubtful age and strength, that I should fear to stand within twenty yards of them, or of the wall, if the guns were submitted to a test with powder and ball; not from fear of being hit by the shot, but from the danger of being killed by the explosion of the guns, or buried in the ruins of tumbling walls.

The inside of these walls, that is the side looking towards the town is lined with two rows of niches, one row placed above the other. These niches are slightly vaulted, measure about six feet in width, six feet in height, and five feet in depth, and were probably intended to afford shelter to the defenders of the town against the scorching rays of the sun. The inside of the town wall, owing to these niches, resembles somewhat the outside aspect of the Coliseum of Rome or to a Roman aqueduct. There are three strong wrought iron plated wooden gates in the wall surrounding the city on the left or eastern river bank; their names are

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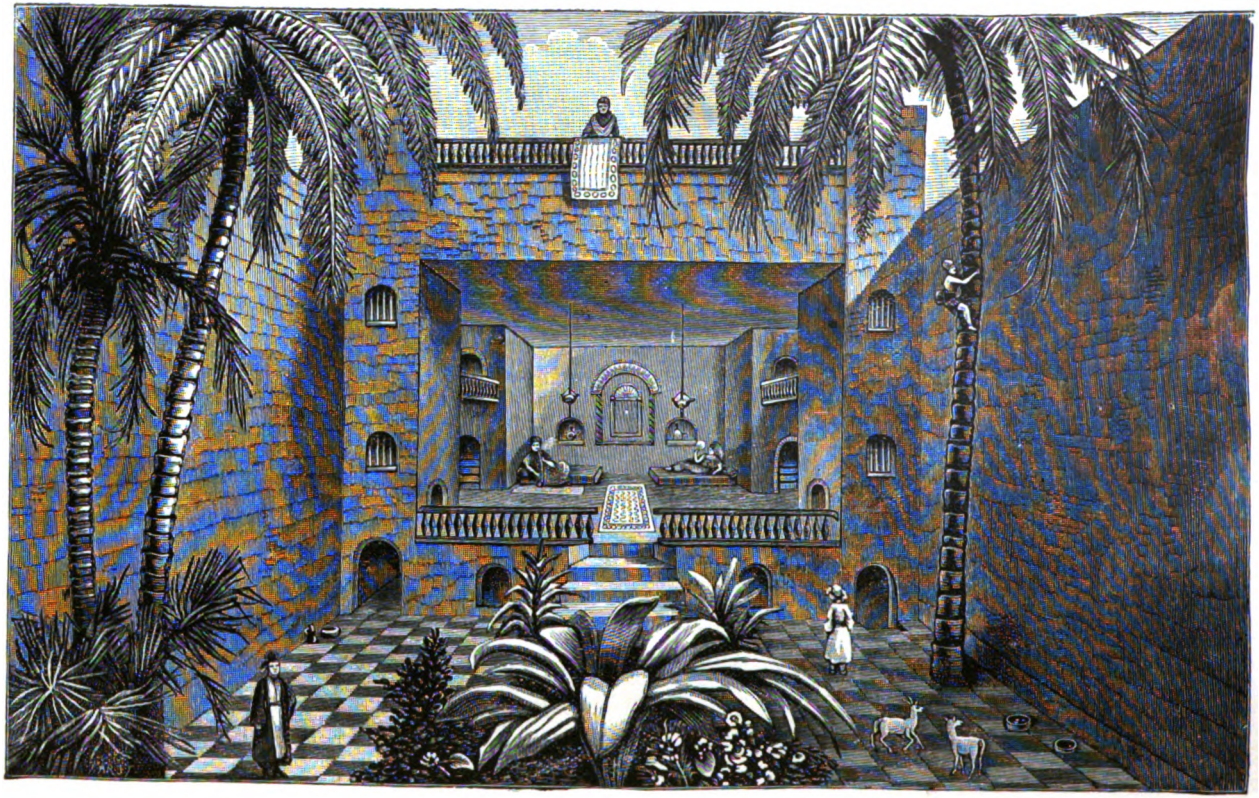

THE MAYOR'S RESIDENCE IN BAGDAD

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Bab al Madern, or the gate of Madern, Bab al Bostán, the gate of the garden, and Bab al Serkis, the gate of Serkis, which are always closely guarded by Turkish soldiers, and Custom-house officers, levying a small duty on the produce of the poor Arabs and Bedouins, who bring sheep's wool, goat's hair skins, vegetables, eggs, venison, milk, cheese, butter, small fire-wood, etc., to town every morning on their donkeys' backs. In the evening, when they leave town, after having disposed of their produce, they are again carefully examined by the watchmen at the gates, lest they should carry some stolen property with them, unless they can bribe the custom house officers, which, by the way, is not a difficult thing to do. The gates are regularly closed at sunset, and not opened under any pretence whatever, until sunrise, a foolish custom, which serves only to annoy decent and honest people, as thieves and robbers can easily find access or egress day or night, by climbing over the dilapidated walls. The walls round the city on the right bank are in worse state even than elsewhere, and are in many places almost level with the ground. During the night the communications between the right and left banks of the city by means of the pontoon bridge, is suspended from sunset till sunrise, by the removal of two boats in the centre. This bridge of boats is the only bridge in Lower Mesopotamia across the Tigris, and is six hundred and twenty feet long. Gooffas or round boats for crossing the river can easily be obtained, however, at any hour.

The "Scrail" (the Governor's or Pasha's palace), all the principal buildings of Bagdad, the dwellings of all the Europeans, native Christians, and Jews, and of all the wealthy Turks, are in that part of the city which lies on the Eastern, or left bank of the river, while the Persians, Afghans, Koords, and the poorer

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classes of the Turks and Arabs occupy the western or right bank. The Eastern city is consequently the principal part of Bagdad, the more so as the main bazaar, or market known as the bazaar, built by Daud Pasha, a former governor, is also situated in this locality, and has the reputation of being the finest, richest, and most extensive in Western Asia. The streets throughout the city are exceedingly narrow, filthy, and very crooked, like those in most Oriental towns; Namyk Pasha, the governor, however, slightly improved some of them during the past year. Being suddenly seized with a passion for driving, he procured a fine carriage at great expense from Bombay. His coachman managed to drive about ten yards, when the carriage ran against a wall, whereupon the Pasha flew into a rage, and ordered all the buildings against which the carriage grated, or the walls toward the streets through which he chose to pass, to be removed two or three feet back. This incident serves to illustrate the character of Eastern thoroughfares, and the arbitrary manner in which Turkish officials settle difficulties. Most of the streets are so narrow that two loaded camels, or two men on horseback, cannot pass each other, which circumstance has induced the Pasha to issue an order forbidding loaded camels to pass through the city. The South-eastern quarter of the left bank city is almost uninhabited. Hundreds of houses are abandoned, and are either in ruins, or fast crumbling to pieces, serving only to shelter the innumerable beggars, vagrants, and ownerless curs, with which Bagdad, like Oriental cities, is infested. The whole of this abandoned quarter was formerly densely populated; but Bagdad has at various times been visited by the flood or inundations of the river Tigris, as well as by the plague, or pestilence, which must not be confounded with Asi-

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atic cholera, being a far more fatal disease than the latter. This terrible scourge infested Bagdad for the last time, if my memory is correct, in the year 1831, at which time over forty thousand of the inhabitants fell victims to its savage fury within the short space of three months.

The houses of Bagdad are built in the usual Moslem style; that is to say, the poorer classes live in miserable brick-houses or rather huts with flat roofs, scarcely ten feet in height and containing but one or two apartments. The dwellings of the wealthier classes are somewhat better built, though of the same material. They too are flat-roofed, but none of them is over forty feet in height, and they all provided with a sort of balcony, called "ehēnashil" by the Arabs. These balconies protrude considerably over the walls, about ten feet above the street, and are carefully barricaded with iron bars or wooden trellis work. In outward appearance, most of the houses and streets are so much alike, that it is almost impossible to distinguish one from another, and as the houses are not numbered and the streets not named, it is a perfect puzzle for a stranger, especially a European, to find the street or house he is looking for, and he is sure to lose himself if without a guide in the labyrinth of narrow lanes, winding between gloomy and dangerously tottering gray walls, which every moment threaten to fall upon him. At night the streets are pitch dark, except when lighted by the moon, and are teeming with vagrant dogs too lazy to get out of the way, some howling piteously when trampled upon, others barking furiously, and all an intolerable nuisance. Each house contains a court-yard in the centre which is open to the free air of heaven, and generally ornamented by a stately date tree in the middle of a little garden. In this yard the whole family live all day long,

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except at noon, perhaps, when the sun has risen so high that hardly any shady spot is left, so that they are obliged to retire till about five o'clock in the afternoon to the "serdap," a kind of square under-ground vault or basement room, to be found in almost every house of ordinary size; here the atmosphere during the whole day is very cool and pleasant. Daylight is admitted through the open doorway, and windows towards the court-yard. The serdap is furnished in the eastern style, with divans, low broad couches ranged along one or two sides of the apartment. The floor is covered with carpets or straw mats, according to the means of the owner. This forms almost the entire furniture of the serdap or drawing-room of the Asiatic population. Europeans alone use tables, chairs, clocks, etc., which are chiefly imported from Bombay. On the first and only story of the house are the sleeping apartments of the family, occupied only from November till February, when it is too chilly to sleep on the flat roofs in the open air, the usual sleeping place during the other nine months of the year, and during which period it never rains in Lower Mesopotamia. The climate, though terribly hot during the summer months, is considered healthy; the thermometer hardly ever ranges beyond 110° Fahrenheit in summer and the coldest day in winter never marks below 40° above zero. Snow is of course quite out of the question, and as far as I could learn has never been seen in Bagdad.

The "Seraïl," or palace of the Governor, is situated a little above the pontoon or bridge of boats across the river, and is said to be on the very spot occupied in former times by the palaces of the caliphs. It is an immense building, with a court yard at least one hundred yards square, and situated directly on the uttermost river bank, affording a beautiful view up and

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down the stately Tigris. The building itself is very plain, and looks more like a large cavalry casern, or a State prison, than a palace; the Pasha's reception room itself is only a large square room with white-washed walls, adorned with a few wretchedly painted blue frescoes, and a very ordinary crystal lustre is suspended from the midst of the ceiling. The only furniture is the inevitable divan or sofa, and the floor is covered with rich Persian carpets. It is not from parsimony, or carelessness, that even the wealthiest Moslems keep their rooms rather poor and dull-looking, but the dictates of the Koran, which strictly prohibits the presence of any picture, statue, etc., representing any living thing, in the house of a Moslem. The zenāna or harem of the Pasha is situated within the area of the large building, but forms a house by itself. It has only very few windows, carefully screened and is surrounded by a wall over twenty feet high, the gate of which is closely guarded by soldiers, while the doors of the house and apartments are guarded by eunuchs and female slaves, both black and white. European ladies, however, easily found access to the wives of Namyk Pasha, of whom there are four; the eldest is fifty-two years of age, the youngest is only fourteen; a beautiful Circassian and a present from the Sultan, Abdul Aziz, since murdered. Each wife has from four to six female attendants, or rather, slaves, both black and white, who like their mistresses, are always closely watched by the eunuchs. These slaves lead a very easy life, having nothing to do but dress their mistresses, sing, dance, and laugh and play with them, or relate love stories and fairy tales; their mistresses meanwhile reclining on the soft silken divans, playing with their jewelry, admiring their images reflected in the mirrors, or smoking the narghilch for which Oriental women have a weakness.

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My sister, accompanied by Madame B., often visited these captive damsels, and were always most cordially welcomed and treated by everybody in the Seraïl with the most profound respect; they invariably had to answer innumerable questions regarding the manners and customs of American ladies, single as well as married, whereupon the Pasha's wives would loudly praise the happiness of our country-women in being the sole object of their husband's love, while the true Moslem had so many wives that, in their opinion, it was impossible that the love of all could be duly reciprocated by one man alone. They greatly admired also the perfect liberty enjoyed by American women, they being allowed to walk and ride whenever and wherever they please, to stay as long as they like and to show their faces whenever they choose, etc., while the poor multifarious wives of the Sultan are only allowed to take a ride or a walk once or twice a week, and then only for an hour or two, always carefully veiled, and guarded by a whole crowd of cowardly eunuchs and female slaves, who follow them as closely as their own shadows. They found it difficult to believe that European women, married and single, always took their meals with their husbands and brothers if they had any, and sometimes even with perfect strangers, and without even a "pagee" or veil over their faces, while they, poor souls, had to eat and drink alone, and were not allowed to leave their room under any pretense unless accompanied by slaves and eunuchs. They greatly regretted not being able to read and write, or play the guitar or piano, with other accomplishments not possessed by many Mohammedan females as far as I know, as they are not allowed, or at any rate, not encouraged in cultivating their intellect. With the exception of these drawbacks, however, they seem as happy as the day is long, and the two ladies so freely

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admitted to their privacy never found them jealous, or quarreling with each other, though the Circassian girl was at the time decidedly the favorite of the Pasha; the more so because she had just given birth to a son.

Namyk Pasha is the civil military governor of the province of Irak Arabi, or Lower Mesopotamia, also Minister of War, and is one of the four Mushiers, or Field Marshals of the Ottoman Empire. He is the identical fellow who so narrowly escaped with his head for his complicity in the notorious massacre of the French and English residents of Dsheddah or Teddah on the Red Sea, which took place June 15th, 1858, at which time he was governor of that seaport. He is a tall, slender, and rather handsome man about seventy years of age, slightly decrepit, with gray hair, moustache and beard, a fanatic Mussulman, but well educated, exceedingly polite and fond of conversation. He is very shrewd, and the most acute politician in the whole Turkish empire. He occupied for several years the high position of minister of foreign affairs of the Sublime Porte; but as he was very ambitious and full of intrigue, the Sultan feared for his own personal safety, and removed his dangerous minister as far away from Constantinople as possible, investing him as a sop to Cerberus with the governorship of Irak Arabi, the province most remote from the imperial abode, where he is now making money fast and putting it of course in his own pockets, doing what he likes, and never heeding a firman or order from his master the Sultan, if it does not suit him. He has studied in Paris and Berlin, and travelled all over Europe, speaks Turkish, Arabic, English, French and German perfectly well, though the wily fellow tries to make the European residents of Bagdad believe that he does not undersand any of the last-mentioned languages. He always wears the uniform of a Turkish

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General, and is constantly surrounded by soldiers, and a profusion of courtiers, servants and slaves. Though a dangerous Moslem fanatic, he is too acute to let Europeans know it. On the contrary, he always professes a strong friendship for them, especially for the English and French consuls, accepts invitations to dine with them, and gives them regular entertainments in return; but in reality he hates them. Of all the Europeans in Bagdad, none perhaps was as intimate with Namyk Pasha as my brother, whom he frequently visited in his office during my stay in Bagdad, always attended by a crowd of body-guards, and fellows of every description; and it was in that office I first made the Pasha's acquaintance.

Namyk Pasha did an extensive business with my brother, who every year sold him European goods to a large amount, for his (the pasha's) own use as well as for that of his troops. Around the serail are situated several large casernes or soldier's barracks, occupied by a part of the stationary Turkish force, comprising in all about five thousand men, artillery, cavalry, and infantry; but these troops are very badly organized, badly paid, badly equipped and badly drilled; the administrators of the military department from the general downward, being wide awake to their own interest, appropriate a great part of the fund of this department to their own use, thus following the good example given them by the Pasha himself, who pockets the public money right and left, and is said to be immensely rich in consequence. Being likely sooner or later to lose his high position, the Pasha is careful to save money, as it may come in handy some future day. The Custom House is another of the large buildings, is situated high on this river bank, a little below the casernes near the place where the pontoon stretches across the river, and

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where the four Bagdad steamers, and the numerous bagalows, or Arab boats plying between Bagdad and Bassorah, ride at anchor. Part of this Custom House is said to have been in former times the kitchen of Haroun al Kashid, the famous caliph, an Arabic inscription to that effect, cut in gigantic relieve letters, dating from those olden times, being carefully preserved and distinctly legible on the wall facing the river. Everybody crossing the river by the pontoon has to pass through the Custom House, which is swarming with petty officials of every description, shouting, yelling and cursing all day long, as if they were bound to imitate certain specimens of our so-called civilized Custom House officers.

The buildings inhabited by the English and the French Consuls, as well as those occupied by the other Europeans and some of those of the wealthier natives, are very substantial and as comfortable as may be expected in that part of the world, especially those tenanted by the Europeans, nearly all of which are situated close to the left river bank, small gardens only intervening them and the river.

The houses of the Europeans are well furnished in half European, half Oriental style; those of the two above mentioned consuls are rendered conspicuous amongst them by their tall flag-staffs, in which the respective owners appear determined to outdo each other, as if their very existence and their influence with the Turkish government depended upon the height of their flag-staffs.

Probably the largest and most comfortable dwelling house in Bagdad is the residence of His Royal Highness "Agbal al Daub," late Nawab (king ruler) of Lucknow (India), who after the Indian mutiny (1857–1859) retired to Bagdad on a pension paid to him by

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the British government amounting to about $30,000 American gold per annum. He is said to be immensely rich and to have brought over two hundred followers along with him from India. Shortly after his arrival in the city of the Caliphs, he built for himself his harem and his retinue the large residence above mentioned, situated close to the left bank of the Tigris, surrounded by beautiful gardens overlooking the river, and furnished with every Asiatic luxury. Bagdad contains between forty and fifty mosques, and as many minarets (pillar shaped towers of the muezzins, or public prayer singers). The mosques are spacious, high, square buildings, generally faced by an extensive court-yard, surrounded by a high wall, something like our penitentiaries. The mosque itself is surrounded by a large cupola of glazed bricks, or earthen slabs of divers colors set in mosaic; every cupola is as previously stated surmounted by the golden crescent, or moon in her first quarter, the symbol of Islam. The interior of the mosque is merely an empty hall, the walls of which are adorned with verses from the Koran and paintings in fresco; besides these there are no ornaments in the hall except perhaps some tall slender pillars of marble or wood supporting the ceiling, executed in some mosques in plain Arabic, in others in elegant Moorish or Byzantine style. In some of the chief mosques, a few silver or gold vessels are suspended by thick silken cords and tassels from the ceiling or cupola, serving partly as lamps and partly as vessels in which to burn frankincense. The whole of the floor in the larger mosques is generally covered with black and white marble slabs, imported from Koordistan or from Persia, laid in mosaic. At regular distances from each other, small carpets are spread on the ground, upon which the Moslems perform their prayers. The native Christians,

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the majority of whom are Roman Catholics, had until lately no other place of worship than the spacious serdap or vault in the building occupied by the French missionaries, who with great perseverance and under considerable difficulties managed a few years ago to get up a fund, collected by subscription, and amounting to about $40,000, with which they built and furnished a very nice, large chapel in Gothic style. The ten or twelve Europeans, who are not Roman Catholics are the worst off, for they have now no place of worship owing to the English missionaries, who for many years preached and taught in Bagdad, having been recalled to the great regret of all; but especially of the natives to whom they had been very benevolent, and for the education of whose children they had worked so determinedly that some of the latter now read and write not only their own, but also the English language, for which many of them evinced a great fondness and acquired it with considerable facility. As to the Americans, who are all Greek Catholics, they congregate for divine service in the building occupied by their bishop, a tall, noble looking old man with flowing silver beard, the finest featured, and at the same time most venerable looking old man I ever saw.

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X.

MORE ABOUT BAGDAD AND VICINITY.

Class Distinction.— A Model Coffee House.—Camels' Resting Place.—Fifty Cents per Day.—Peddling Water.—"Basket Boat."—Social Life.—Equipped for an Excursion.—Our Guide.—Sighting Gazelles.—Training the Falcon and Greyhound.—Arch of Ctesiphon.—Peculiarities of Women of Bagdad.

The city on the right river bank is considerably smaller than that on the left, and is occupied by the most fanatic part of the Moslem population of Bagdad, viz., Persians, Afghans, Koords, and the poorer classes of the Turks and Arabs, who will not suffer either a Jew or a Christian to inhabit this part of the city. The houses on this side of the Tigris are far inferior in comfort and size to those on the left bank, many of them being mere huts, consisting of four very rough and carelessly built walls of sun-dried bricks, not over ten feet high, and covered with a flat roof of boughs or reeds plastered over with a thick layer of mud. Windows, of course, are out of the question. The continually open doorway and one or two small square holes in the wall admit sufficient daylight to enable the inhabitants of the hut to see each other, which is all that is required, there being no danger of damaging the furniture of these miserable dwellings, as with the exception of a few straw mats on the ground and, perhaps, a few earthen water jugs, and copper cooking utensils lying in one corner, and a stark naked babe, or a couple of young dogs or kids in the other, there is nothing in the whole hut to obstruct the way.

The right-bank city sports a kind of bazaar for it-

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self, situated in the street nearest to the river and running parallel with the latter. This bazaar, however, is far inferior to that in the left-bank city, and is only remarkable for its great number of coffee houses, or rather coffee drinking establishments, for they are, in fact, no houses at all; the proprietor being the happy inhabitant of a country where rain is almost unknown, can dispense with a house. The carpenter, therefore, makes him a few clumsy benches or stools, which he places in some locality good for business, generally close to the river's edge, where water is handy and where customers may enjoy the gentle breeze and splendid view of the noble river. If he is a man of sense and the happy owner of a few piasters, he will invest his funds in procuring some shade for his customers by protecting his establishment from the rays of the scorching sun by means of an awning constructed in the most primitive manner. Four long poles are stuck upright into the ground about twenty feet apart, at right angles with a large, coarse straw mat extended between them about twelve feet above the ground. Under this awning the customers slowly and solemnly take their seats and patiently wait till the cāhnagee or cafetier brings them a "narghilch" (water-pipe), a "shāttab" (long pipe), or a "sebil" (short pipe), stuffed full of tobacco, lighted and ready for use; the cāhnagee generally knowing by experience to which of these three tobacco-smoking implements his customer gives the preference. While the latter is lazily yielding to the soothing effect of the tobacco, the cafetier hastens to his kitchen—that is to a small fire burning between three or four large bricks stuck upright in the ground—where the coffee is boiling in an iron or copper pot; which he lifts, boiling hot, from the fire and carries to his customers, filling a little "fenshān" (a small coffee cup holding not

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more than from one to two tablespoonfuls) with the delicious beverage of which he passes one or more fenshāns full to each customer.

I call it a delicious beverage, for such in fact it is; a widely different mixture from the nauseous drug honored with the name of coffee as prepared, in many instances, all over the rest of the world. The Arab knows how to make coffee as it should be made. The Turks and Persians are pretty good coffee brewers, too, but nothing in comparison with the Arab. Neither of the above-mentioned nations ever grind the roasted coffee kernels, but invariably pound them in iron or stone mortars, a difference of manipulation which has doubtless much to do with the superior flavor of their beverage. Their coffee is very thick and strong, without that disagreeable taste of being boiled down or concentrated. Moslems never drink their coffee sweetened in any way.

This absence of sugar is in my opinion the only reason that Europeans do not relish the coffee of the Arabs first; but I have invariably heard those who had drank it for any length of time declare that they would never again taste any European coffee.

In that part of the right bank city most remote from the river are situated the innumerable stables for the camels of the large caravans which arrive at and start from Bagdad almost every day, laden with merchandise from all parts of Europe, Asia, and Africa. These stables are of very simple construction, consisting merely of a series of large or small areas of level ground, enclosed by rough mud or brick walls about ten feet in height, intersected by one or two large gates. They are only occupied during the night, as the camels are driven every morning first to the river to drink, and thence to the desert which surrounds the suburbs of

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AFTER LUNCH IN THE CAFÉ.

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Bagdad on all sides, where they feed all day on the scanty supply of a prickly shrub, generally about eight inches high, of a light green color, and a very bitter taste. This plant, the name of which I cannot recollect, is entirely a native of Arabia; is the only vegetation in the desert, and is exceedingly scanty itself in certain parts of the country during the hot season. At sunset the camels are driven back to town, and shut up for the night in the stables. The suburbs of Bagdad, along both river banks, are covered with numerous luxuriant gardens, each surrounded by a mud wall about eight feet high. These gardens, owing to the scorching hot climate of this country, have to be irrigated day and night almost without interruption, by means of a kind of draw well, dug from ten to twenty feet deep into the bank of the river; out of it the water is drawn by a pair of oxen or horses, which raise it from the bottom of the well in a huge leather bag, tied to the end of a rope, running round a wheel fixed above the mouth of the well, the other end of which is attached to the animals working the well. The leather bag is so arranged that as soon as it arrives at the surface of the earth, it empties itself into a wooden trough, which conducts the water into the innumerable small ditches, that run in different directions all through the gardens, and, by their uninterrupted supply of water, cause the vegetation to remain in a wonderfully fresh and luxuriant state all the year round, so much so indeed that these gardens amply repay their owners for the expenses of labor and irrigation, by the astonishing quantity of dates, grapes, mulberries, figs, oranges, lemons, pomegranates, peaches, plums, almonds, sugar melons, water melons, all sorts of vegetables, and the profusion of flowers of every kind which they produce. I have myself seen a Persian merchant and distiller of

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the fragrant Oriential rose-oil pay 2,000 Persian Kerans ($500 in gold) cash down, to the proprietor of an ordinary sized garden, for one season's crop of roses only.

Living is very cheap in Bagdad; native families live comfortably on two Kerans (about fifty cents) per day, and a European, if he is a bachelor, can live with great comfort on four thousand Kerans per annum, equal to twenty thousand Turkish piasters, or one thousand dollars in gold. With this amount he can rent as comfortable a house as could be found in the city, keep two or three native servants, one or two horses, and a good table all the year round. The inhabitants of Bagdad are obliged to procure from the river Tigris all the water they use, for there is none other fresh to be found within twenty miles. The few cisterns remote from the river contain only bad water, of a stagnant, saltish taste, which produces malaria and fever. The Tigris water, though slightly muddy, is very good, and may be drank in large quantities without any bad effect, especially when filtered, which is done by a peculiar kind of very porous unglazed earthen jars, or rather, urns, called "sherbi," manufactured by the Arabs. The water is kept in these vessels in a shady corner of the house, especially where there is a draught of air. As soon as it is put into the "sherbi" it begins at once to clear, the mud settling at the bottom of the jar, and the air striking the exterior of the porous urn, soon renders the contents delightfully clear, and so cool that it almost makes a person's teeth ache when it is held in the mouth. This water is carried from the river into the houses by men or boys called "saka," *i. e.*, water carriers, each of whom owns a donkey and a large leather water bag made of goatskin, capable of holding about five gallons, which they fill

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at the river, tie up the mouth with a string and fling them across the donkey's back, and thus carry it round to their customers. Thousands of people gain their livelihood in this way, not only in Bagdad, but all over the Orient, and are constantly obstructing the narrow thoroughfares so characteristic of Eastern towns. It is very amusing to witness the horror of strangers, and of Europeans especially, at the idea that they must quench their thirst with the water of the river in which they daily see thousands upon thousands of people of all ages, sexes, creeds, and colors, bathing, and just as frequently behold a dead camel, horse, mule, donkey, or dog, drifting down with the current; sometimes, even a human corpse advanced in decomposition. Nothing, indeed, but the excruciating thirst from which strangers and new comers invariably suffer during the first few weeks of their residence in Bagdad, could induce them to break their too hastily made vows never to touch the water of the river Tigris.

The inhabitants of the banks of both the Tigris and the Euphrates, but especially the people of Bagdad, use a peculiar boat, or rather, a basket, for the purpose of crossing the river. This boat is called "gooffa" by the natives, and is in fact nothing but a mammoth basket, perfectly round and shaped like a round loaf of bread, or a thick double-cased watch. They are from four to eight feet in diameter, and will carry from half a ton to two tons, or from four to twenty persons. They are made of very strong wicker-work thickly tarred inside and outside, so as to make them perfectly water-tight. The gooffa, like the bālam, a canoe previously described, is propelled by either one or two men, each using a short paddle or oar shaped like a spoon, or shovel, resembling the paddles of the Indians, or Esquimaux. With this they manage to move the

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gooffa through the water, slowly enough, however, as she has no keel and draws but little water unless heavily loaded. It is altogether a very clumsy and unwieldy kind of boat, and can only be propelled against the current by dint of great exertion and by continually changing the paddle, giving alternately one stroke to the right and one to the left; but when it has to go for any considerable distance up the river, it is dragged by means of a long rope, pulled by one or more men walking along the river bank. Owing to the scarcity, or rather, scantiness of wind on the plains of Lower Mesopotamia, all the bāgalows or sail-boats previously referred to as plying on the river Tigris between Bagdad and Bassorah, and on the Euphrates between Hillah and Bassorah, carrying merchandise, firewood, etc., have to employ, every time they make their up-river journey, from four to eight men, who pull the boat along against the current in the same way that the gooffas are moved up the river; the sails of the boat being but seldom swelled sufficiently by the breeze to urge the boat against the current without the assistance of these men. As may be presumed, this boat pulling is very hard work, and what makes it worse, very badly paid, each man getting but two Turkish piasters per diem, equal to about nine cents in American money. Owing to the intense heat during the day, these men generally work only during the night and early in the morning; that is, from about 6 P. M. till 10 A. M., the bāgalow being at anchor the hottest part of the day, during which period the whole crew, except the watchman, devote themselves to the worship of Morpheus. Marauding Bedouins sometimes surprise and plunder these bāgalows, burning or sinking them, afterwards killing the crew and throwing them in the river if they offer any resistance. The downward journey of these bāgalows from Bagdad or

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Hillah to Bassorah consumes generally from four to eight days, while the up-river journey naturally requires from two to four weeks.

The gooffa is unmistakably the most primitive boat known. Its first use must date three thousand years back, as fac-similes of this clumsy craft may be seen on some of the relics excavated from the ruins of Babylon, Nineveh, Selencia, etc., and described by Della Valle Rennel, Rich, Niebuhr, Sayard, Botta, and other travelers. Another interesting and scarcely less primitive means of navigation is the "kēleck," a kind of small raft, made of a frame work of poles, with boughs of trees lain crosswise upon it, and fastened to poles by means of ropes, strips of rawhide, willows, etc. This raft is supported and lifted at least six inches above the water by a great number of tooloochs, or inflated goat-skins, attached to the under part of the raft at distances from each other, varying from six to twelve inches, so that a raft ten feet square would be supported by from one hundred to four hundred inflated goat-skins, according to the weight it is intended to carry. The usual size of these rafts is about fifteen feet in length by about ten feet in width. They are generally manned by two men, who work alternately, as the boat is only provided with one oar, which serves more for steering than propelling, so that the men have scarcely anything to do but to keep the kēleck nicely in the middle of the current of the river, or in deep water, to prevent the tooloochs from getting torn by coming in contact with snags and sharp rocks. These rafts are of course only used for down river navigation; those arriving in Bagdad generally come from two large cities higher up the river from Diarbekir, the capital of Koordistân, and from Mossul, the capital of Upper Mesopotamia, whence they are freighted with merchandise brought by

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caravans from the shores of the Mediterranean sea, the conveyance by the river being effected much cheaper, quicker, and safer than by hand. Many of the kēlecks also bring passengers or stone and wood for building purposes to Bagdad, there being no large stones to be found within two hundred miles of that city, nor any wood (except date-tree wood, which is unfit for building purposes) thicker than a broom-handle.

The kēlecks made for European passengers are comparatively comfortable, there being generally a little wooden house built, or a tent pitched for them on the raft in which they can live quite snugly.

In the spring of 1865, I traveled in company with Mr. J——, a countryman of mine, on one of these kelecks from Diarbekir to Bagdad, a distance of over 600 miles. We journeyed day and night, making the voyage from Diarbekir to Mossul in five days, and from Mossul to Bagdad in six days; but we could have made it in considerably less time, if we had not stopped at several of the principal villages situated on the banks of the river. I shall never forget the beautiful scenery we occasionally fell in with, especially when seen by moonlight. We had a capital time, and were very comfortable indeed; we cooked our meals on the keleck, and were well provided with a good stock of provisions, splendid Diarbekir wine, and Manila cigars. We had half a dozen living fowls on board, which walked about the keleck in perfect liberty, and even laid eggs on board, while the cock made himself useful, by waking us up every morning before sunrise, by his loud exulting cry. All day long we were firing at the ducks, geese, flamingos, pelicans, etc., we saw promenading on the sand banks of the river, and at night we shot at the numerous herds of wild pigs, gazelles, and jackals, which came down to the river

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to drink, never noticing our keleck as it glided smoothly, silently down the silvery stream, though the moon shone so brightly that the night was almost as light as day. We had good comfortable beds, but made hardly any use of them, as we passed the night in singing, talking, and smooking, when tired of shooting.

The social life of Bagdad is naturally at a low ebb. Theatres, balls, concerts, etc., are of course entirely out of the question. Most of the European residents there are bachelors. Some of those who are married have taken native women for their wives, who though trying hard to assume European manners, find it difficult to throw off the indolence and reserve, and the foolish bashfulness, characteristic of the women of the Orient, who, from their defective education, do not care, or rather cannot undertake to talk about anything but local matters. The Europeans in Bagdad are therefore limited to out-door amusements, such as riding, shooting and boating. Some of them own fine European built row and sailing boats, but all outdoor exercise can, during nine months of the year, only be enjoyed early in the morning and late in the evening, the heat of the sun being too intense during the remainder of the day.

Of the five or six European ladies residing in Bagdad at the time of my visit, most of them have left there since, owing to their inability to stand the enervating climate.

During our stay in Bagdad, we made almost daily excursions into the neighborhood of the city, partly for sport, partly for curiosity, and as our friends had placed their numerous splendid horses at our disposal, we frequently availed ourselves of their kindness. Our first excursion of this kind was made about a week

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after our arrival, to the already described ruins of Ctesiphon, for the purpose of hunting gazelles with falcons and Arabian greyhounds, up to then an entirely novel kind of sport to me. I will give a brief account of the incidents of one day's hunt.

We left the city two hours before sunset, and keeping our fiery horses in a brisk canter nearly all the way, arrived just at sunset, at the mosque in the immediate neighborhood of the ruins of Taak Kesra. The janitor of the mosque is a Bedouin named Abdallah ebn Ismael (Abdallah son of Ismael) well known among the Arabs of that district as a very skilful falconer, greyhound trainer, and horse-breaker. He seemed to feel highly honored by the unexpected visit of six "Frankies." (Europeans). On hearing the cause of our call, he at once declared himself ready to comply with our wishes. Long before daybreak he roused us from our morning sleep, and we started for the field of action, our Bedouin leading the little cavalcade, riding on an outrageously ugly pony, entirely innocent of horse shoes, which, by the way, the Bedouins never use. He wore the usual loose dark brown woolen Bedouin gown, with a scarf round his loins. On his outstretched right hand, which was covered with a thick leather glove, was perched a powerful falcon, about the size of a full grown kite, with a gaudily ornamented leather cap drawn tightly over its head. In his left hand he held his horse's bridle and a long line drawn through the collars of two rough-haired, dreadfully lean, thoroughbred greyhounds, trotting silently by the side of their master's pony, ready to be slipped at a moment's notice. Our guide was closely followed by his son, a boy about twelve years old, mounted and equipped like his father; my friends and myself followed, riding silently

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in Indian file. The two Bedouins were each armed only with a long knife, while we wore revolvers in case we should be attacked by Bedouins, who are notorious for committing highway robberies in that neighborhood.

We rode about six miles into the desert, in a due easterly direction, when day began to break and, soon after we discovered a herd of about twenty gazelles ahead of us, quietly feeding on the scanty herbage and shrubbery of the parched plain. Our Bedouin motioned us to slacken our horses' pace, to ride slowly ahead two abreast and close together, while he swerved at an angle of about forty-five degrees from the course he had hitherto taken, and we followed closely in his tracks, passing the gazelles within a quarter of a mile. The graceful animals, always wide awake and ready to bound away, could not help seeing us at a long distance, as the desert seemed one endless level; but having perfect confidence in their truly wonderful speed, they did not heed us at all, till we swerved from the track, when they raised their heads to look at us, apparently wondering what we were dodging about for so early in the morning; but seeing us proceed quietly and silently in a slightly slanting direction, they soon felt confident that we did not mean mischief, and resumed their feeding. Their suspicions had no sooner been lulled than the Bedouin slowly and almost imperceptibly resumed his former direction so that we got within three hundred yards of them, when a noble old buck, the leader of the herd, proudly drew up his head, furnished with a beautiful set of knotted finely horns, and repeatedly stamped the ground with one of his tapering fore feet, as if to warn his company of imminent danger; whereupon they all drew up their heads almost simultaneously to watch our movements. Directly a sort of commotion was clearly

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discernible among them, followed by a sort of sharp nasal whistle or cry issuing from the nostrils of the wily old buck, and off they bounded with astonishing velocity and elasticity of limb over the barren flats, leaving but a little cloud of dust behind to indicate the course which they had taken. But, alas! in spite of all their speed, they were overtaken; for the moment the old buck blew his whistle, the cap of the falcon was removed, and almost simultaneously the gallant bird rose into the air, like an arrow sped from the bow; at the same time the dogs, which had all the time kept remarkably quiet by our side, though they had espied the gazelles as soon as we did, were slipped from the leash, and shot off at an alarming pace after the nimbel fugitives. With a cry of joyous excitement we thundered in pursuit, as fast as our horses could pelt over the rough ground, the surface of which was rent in many places with innumerable clefts of considerable width and depth, caused by the excessive heat of the climate, exceedingly dangerous for both rider and steed. A horse going at full speed would certainly break his legs if he made but one false step, and put his foot in one of the gaping crevices, some of which were at least five feet deep by eight inches wide. Luckily all of our horses were so sure-footed that no accident happened, and our small troop kept well together, led by the two Bedouins who, though mounted on ugly half starved looking nags, had such confidence in their steeds, that they dropped the bridles on the horses' necks, and never once looked on the rough ground before them; but kept their eyes steadily fixed on a scarcely visible black spot high in the air, which was nothing less than the gallant falcon darting like a thunderbolt from the clouds into the midst of the terror stricken gazelles and alighting on the head of one of the finest of the

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herd, took a firm hold with his long, sharp claws, as well as with his beak, on the skin of the forehead of the doomed gazelle. This done, he began to batter the eyes of the trembling fugitive with his large powerful wings, with so much effect as to cause it to lag behind its fleet companions, so completely absorbed in the desperate but vain endeavor to shake off its audacious tormentor, by tossing its head in every direction, or by transfixing him with its sharp horns, that the hapless creature quite forgot the two large panting grey-hounds, who came bounding towards it with incredible speed.

Another moment and the noble gazelle rolled over and over, raising a cloud of dust, and was instantly pinioned to the ground by its fierce canine pursuers. The hapless animal uttered a loud and truly piteous death-cry, and struggled hard until the Bedouin, who arrived first on the spot, leaped from his horse and put an end to the agonies of the poor creature with a quick cut across its throat. At the sight of blood, the falcon, who had never let go his hold during the whole scuffle, even at the risk of his life, now changed his position for the purpose of feeding upon the reeking flesh of his victim, which he attacked with the voracity peculiar to his species. The gallant bird had not tasted food for three days, the falconers being obliged to starve their birds and hounds to induce them to chase any game. Sometimes they are not fed even after having caught their victim, in order to force them to hunt a second, or third time the same day, which they will not do after their hunger is appeased. The plucky dogs, as soon as the gazelle had expired, threw themselves flat on the ground, panting heavily and apparently in great distress, for the chase had been long and hard. The Bedouin boy, however, soon restored them by sprinkling over their

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heads, chests, and bellies, the water he carried in the skin attached to his horse's saddle for that purpose.

After about a quarter of an hour's rest, the boy attached the gazelle to his saddle, and we slowly retraced our way to Ctesiphon, the beams of the sun already beginning to be intensely hot, although it was hardly more than two hours after sunrise. The Bedouins seldom if ever chase the gazelle after sunrise, considering it foolish to overstrain their horses and greyhounds; moreover, they all assert that the heat of the early morning sun is far more injurious to man and beast than at any other time during the remainder of the day, as the change of temperature is far greater and more abrupt from night to morning than from evening to night. On our way home we espied, both on our right and left, several other small herds; they were very shy, however, and made off before we could get within half a mile of them; besides, both of the dogs went lame, so we had good reasons for not trying another chase. Not far from Taak Kesra we started several bustards, called by the Arabs "hoobārah."

These large birds are of a bluish gray and white color, in shape and size very much like a large goose. On their heads they carry a tuft of feathers which can be raised like a cockatoo's. They are exceedingly shy and take readily to wing, but will settle again soon if not pursued. They live on grass and other vegetable matter, and their flesh, though not as juicy as that of the domestic goose, is very good. The Arabs hunt them with falcons, which, when properly trained, attack and kill them with great dexterity by darting at their heads and picking out their eyes. The bustard, when attacked by the falcon, ruffles up his feathers just like a turkey, and makes a few awkward attempts to show fight with his bill, when the idea seems to strike him that it is

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better to run or fly away, and "live to fight another day." The falcon, however, means business. He soon overtakes and attacks the cowardly bird with a will, not leaving off till he has disabled or killed his victim, which is not always an easy matter, for the cowardly bustard has the power of ejecting with fatal precision, a sticky, offensive matter from under its tail, which, if thrown in the eyes of his antagonist, will instantly blind him, and should it fall on his plumage render him incapable of flying; a punishment which so disgusts a falcon that, if once energetically served in this way by a bustard, can never be induced to face one of these nasty customers again. Our second and smaller falcon bagged three of them on the way home without meeting with any mishap.

The Arabs train the falcon in the following way: They starve them, and oblige them from youth to eat all the food they get (consisting invariably of fresh raw meat) from the forehead of a stuffed gazelle's head, on which the meat is fastened by a string. As soon as the falcon has settled on the stuffed animal's head and begins to tear away the meat, the head is waved to and fro in every direction, in order to teach the bird to stick fast to his prey and by no means allow himself to be shaken off. When the falcon has learned a little of what he is required to do in future, the meat is tied on the forehead of a tamed, living gazelle, or a gazelle-colored goat. As soon as the leather cap, which they are obliged to wear almost continually, is removed, the falcon flies to attack the meat voraciously, inserting his claws into the skin of the poor animal, which, tortured by the pain, tries, of course, to shake off its tormentor by violently tossing its head in all directions, rolling on the ground, etc. The falcon, determined to stick to the meat, naturally flaps his wings to retain his equilibrium,

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which serves to confuse and blind the animal, on whose head he is so obstinately perched. Sometimes, though not often, the gazelle succeeds in killing its tormentor, by transfixing him with its sharp-pointed horns, or by squeezing him to death by rolling itself on the ground.

The Arabs often hunt the gazelle without falcons, merely with greyhounds; but this is always killing work for the poor horses and greyhounds, and can only be accomplished after several days' rain, when the surface of the earth becomes moist and cloggy. Then the gazelle hunters grease the feet of their horses and dogs so thoroughly that the mud will not stick to them, while it does to the feet of the gazelles, and so much impedes the speed of the latter that they may be overtaken both by horses and dogs. In dry weather and on solid ground, however, no other living creature than the falcon, or some very fast flying bird, can compete in speed with this fleetest of quadrupeds. The Bedouins, also, occasonally hunt the gazelle on camels, as it is less afraid of the approach of the camel than of the horse. By dint of great patience, and by lying flat on their faces on the camel's back, as if asleep, the wily Bedouins approach within a hundred yards of a herd, and can easily bring them down with a shot.

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XI.

VISITING HISTORIC PARTS.

Akr Koof—Median Wall—Origin—Monument of Zobaida—The old Janitor—Mosque of El Madem—Golden Crescent—"Tromba" Gardens' Proceeds—Visited by Ladies of the Harem—Mysterious Hillah—Night Visit to a sleeping Kahn—Jackals—Chasing Bedouins—Mahawal—Our Reception—The Astonished Guide—The Mounds—Sumptuous Meal—Mayor's Residence—Soldiers' Wash-day.

A few days after this gazelle hunt we made another very interesting excursion to the ruins of "Akr Koof," situated about twelve miles to the northwest of Bagdad, on the southern bank of a little river called Nahr Esa Saklāwia, and which appears to have formerly been a canal connecting the river Euphrates with the Tigris. We started from Bagdad a little before daylight, five of us in number, accompanied by almost as many servants carrying provisions, and all mounted on horseback. The first part of our way led along the right bank of the lovely Tigris, embedded between evergreen gardens and tall stately date-trees, till we reached "El Hor" or "El Chor," a little choked-up right-hand tributary of the Tigris, joining the latter just below Bagdad. Here the gardens and date-trees gave way to immense clusters of tall red grass, densely covering both banks of the swampy rivulet which appears to have formerly been connected by a canal with the Nahr Esa Saklāwia above mentioned. Its reedy banks are fairly alive with wild ducks, geese, flamingos, cranes, and other waterfowl, of the first mentioned species of which we shot a goodly number. On our arrival at Akr Koof we were rather disappointed to find that all the ruins

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visible on the spot consisted of a few tumuli, or mounds, most of them perforated with holes dug by the Arabs in search of antiques. One of these tumuli, a little larger than the rest, is surmounted by a low square tower, which must formerly have been of considerable height; but the three to four thousand years which have witnessed its existence have succeeded in reducing the tower (one of the most interesting architectural relics of that period) to its present dimensions of about one hundred feet in height by about eighty feet in diameter. It is built of large sundried bricks intersected by layers of petrified clay and reedgrass; its upper part is still in comparatively good preservation, but its base, owing no doubt to the frequent excavations of the natives in search of antiques or treasure, is fast crumbling to pieces. The structure does not appear to have had any windows; there are not even any indications that it was furnished with loopholes, at least as far down as the present height of the tower. What struck me now most, in the aspect of these remarkable ruins, was the fact that there is no opening visible by which one may gain access to the tower. The Arabs, some of whom are said to have climbed the ruins on the outside, say that the walls are immensely thick; but that there is no access to the interior, owing to its being entirely filled up with debris of brick and mortar intermixed with sand.

This tower is said by archæologians to have been used as a fortress as well as a lookout. Even in its present state of greatly reduced height, it must command a view of more than two hundred square miles of the perfectly flat valley of the Tigris and Euphrates. Akr Koof is supposed to be of great age. History, however, only casually mentions it, and does not give the date of its destruction. About twelve miles higher

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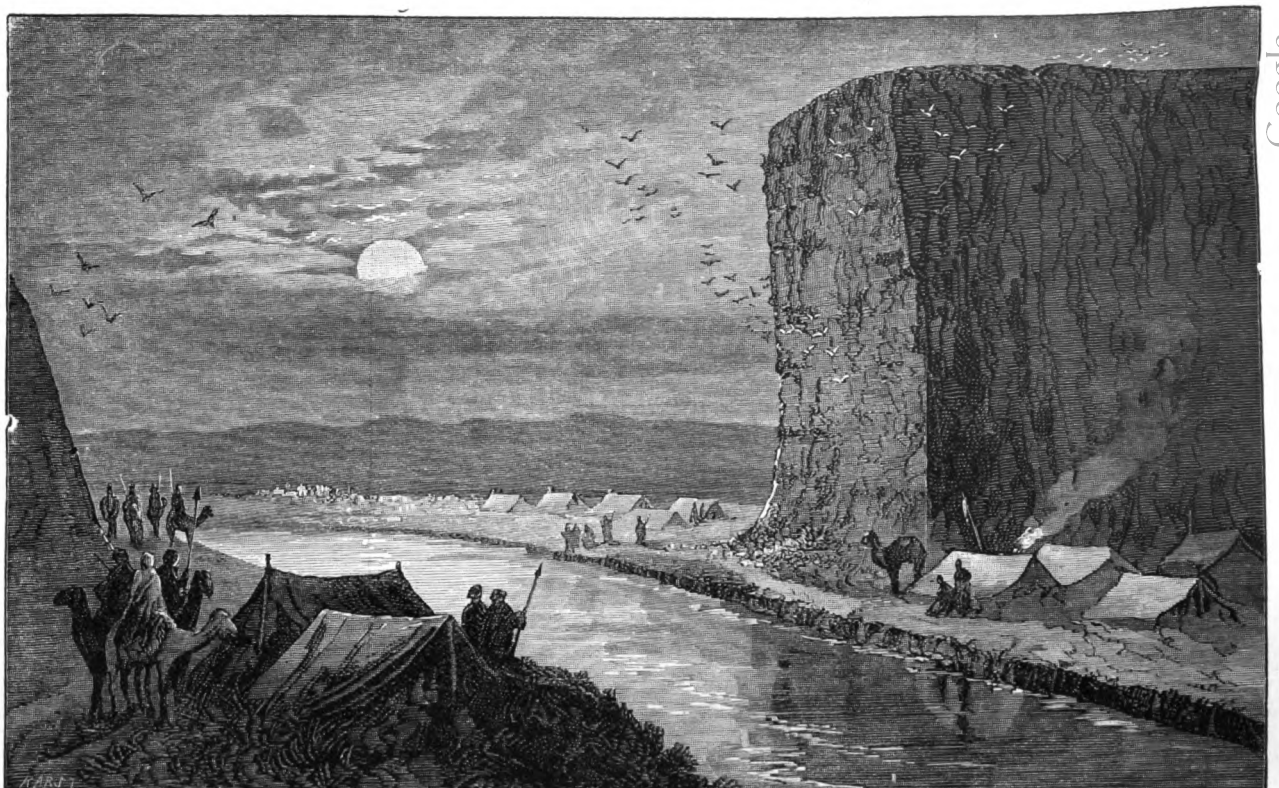

ENCAMPED IN THE SHADOW OF MEDIAN WALL.

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up the plain, where the country reassumes the aspect of the desert, lie the huge remains of the famous Median wall, called by the Arabs "Sidd Nimrood," which we reached after an hour's brisk ride across the parched and dreadfully monotonous plain. This wall formerly stretched from the northern bank of the river Euphrates right across the whole country lying between the two great rivers to the southern bank of the river Tigris. Viewed from afar the remains of this mammoth wall strikingly resemble a long chain of high, steep and flat-topped hills of equal height, or the remains of the wall of Soliman Bhag, previously described in my report on the ruins of Ctesiphon and Selenica. The Median wall is, like the latter, merely an earthwall, but is of immensely larger size, as, to judge from the remains still visible on the ground, it must have originally measured at least one hundred feet in height, from eighty to one hundred feet in thickness, and from sixty to seventy miles in length. It is supposed, as its Arabic name implies, to have been built by Nimrod, one of the earliest rulers of Babylonia or Chaldea.* According to tradition the wall was surrounded by huge towers, or forts built of bricks, stationed at regular distances from each other. These forts were garrisoned all the year round by large numbers of Babylonian warriors.

As to its origin, historians and archæologians greatly differ in their opinions; some, as above stated, ascribe it to Nimrod, who according to biblical tradition ruled over the country about 2200 years B.C.; others date its origin to about 1000 B.C., and its completion to about 700 B.C. The latter opinion, however, is probably incorrect. However this may be, it is certain that this mammoth structure must have been the

* Genesis x, 8–10.

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work of hundreds of thousands of human beings, lasting perhaps for centuries; even the fastidious Greeks considered it one of the architectural wonders of the world. It was unmistakably a formidable barrier, the assault and capture of which in times when gunpowder and artillery were not yet dreamed of, and defended as it was by an army of desperate warriors, must have been a very difficult task for any invader. The tooth of time has, however, left sad marks on this relic of ancient history, as the wall is now scarcely more than half of its original size and intersected or leveled to the ground for many miles; but whether its destruction has been accomplished by the hand of man, by earthquakes, or by floods, cannot be ascertained. What struck me most vividly, on my visit to the Median wall, was the circumstance that there are no ditches or hollows visible all over the country, except the canals in the neighborhood, which seems to imply that the immense quantity of earth required for the construction of the gigantic wall, must either have been the material dug out of the canals which intersect this part of the country, brought thither from a great distance, or that large hills, scattered over the plains, must have been leveled to furnish the requisite material. I also noticed the same peculiarity on the walls of Soliman Bhag.

Leaving the Median wall about 8 P.M., we rode ten miles in a southeasterly direction, when we reached "Tell Heir," a little Arab village on the right bank of the Tigris, where we rested our horses for an hour. Resuming our journey, we followed the road downward along the banks of the stately river, and arrived in Bagdad just before the gates were closed for the night.

Three days afterwards, we paid a visit to the

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"Monument of Zebeida," or "Zobaida," a kind of huge mausoleum, said to have been erected by Haroun al Raschid, the caliph, in memory of his favorite wife, who died on that very spot in the prime of youth and feminine beauty. The mausoleum is erected on a sandy, slightly elevated spot, about three miles west of Bagdad, between the river Tigris and the rivulet "El Hor," near their confluence. The monument is a square building constructed of large yellowish gray bricks, and measures about one hundred feet on each side by about thirty feet in height. This structure seems to have been intended as a kind of pedestal to a large round spiral-shaped tower cut off horizontally on the top—the probable height of the monument or mausoleum, including the tower, being between one hundred and twenty and one hundred and fifty feet. The roof of the lower building or pedestal is flat; on each corner of this platform protrudes a small cupola, which forms the ceiling or rather vault of a chamber underneath. Access to the top of the tower must be gained from the inside, as the breadth of the spiral-shaped windings round the tower hardly exceeds eighteen inches, a space too narrow to permit an ascent from the outside. The whole structure has but one door, and no windows at all, air and light being admitted by a series of small loopholes in different parts of the building. None but Mohammedans are allowed access to the interior, which I have been told looks like an ordinary mosque. The janitor of the building is an old gray-haired dervish or Mohammedan priest, who is said never to leave the premises.

We also enjoyed several very interesting visits on horseback to the mosque of "El Mādem," which is only about four miles north of Bagdad, and scarcely a mile distant from the left bank of the Tigris. This mosque

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is the most beautiful place of Mohammedan worship, not only of Bagdad, but of all Mesopotamia. It is a square building of large size. Its tall and slender minarets, and bold cupolas, gorgeously ornamented with white, green, blue, yellow and black mosaic work, glazed all over, and glittering like diamonds in the sun. High over these shines the golden crescent, the symbol of Islam, visible far, far away in the desert, serving as a guiding star or compass to the weary traveler on the sandy ocean, perched on his animated ship, the faithful dromedary. The mosque "El Mādem" is surrounded on all sides by gardens filled with tall and slender date-trees, most luxuriant shrubbery and fruit-trees. "El Mādem" is said to be the burial place of several of the caliphs of Bagdad, and like most of the places of Moslem worship is inaccessible to unbelievers. The only mosque I ever entered is that of Sultan Hussein or Hassan, in Cairo, in Egypt, which is, I believe, the only one in the world accessible to visitors of all creeds. Between "El Mādem" and the left bank of the Tigris are situated the "Tromba" gardens, belonging to the Turkish government, or rather the latter has assumed the proprietorship of them, in the arbitrary manner with which it usually settles disputes regarding mine and thine. These beautiful gardens are of great extent, and though very little trouble is taken to keep them in order, they are filled with the most beautiful flowers and delicious fruit which this exceedingly fertile country is capable of producing when properly irrigated. The annual proceeds from the sale of flowers, especially roses and jasmine, as well as of oranges, lemons, dates, mulberries, guavas, figs, pomegranates, plums, peaches, grapes, melons, cucumbers, etc., from these gardens, are really astonishing. Near the entrance is situated a kind of summer house, or pavilion, resorted

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to by the members of the Pashá's harem, who frequently visit these gardens; during their visits, however, nobody else is admitted. On such occasions the female department of the Pasha's establishment forms a very numerous and amusing cavalcade; the ladies of the harem carefully veiled, riding astride, (as is customary with the female sex throughout Asia and Africa,) on their snow-white, richly caparisoned donkeys of a breed indigenous only to Bagdad, Bassorah, and Kuwrit, justly prized for their size and superior qualities, and therefore much in demand throughout Mesopotamia, Arabia, and Syria. This gay female cavalry is surrounded on all sides by numerous eunuchs, mostly Nubian or Abyssinian negroes, forming a bodyguard armed to the teeth, and looking consequently rather dangerous on their beautiful and wildly prancing Arab horses. These worthies are, however, not near as desperate as they look; most abject cowardice is the prominent features in their real character, and not one of them could in case of danger muster courage enough to defend the hapless women under his charge, but would at once make use of his splendid charger to put as great a distance as possible between himself and the scene of danger.

A week or two after our visit to "Aler Koof" and "Sidd Nimrood," we made preparations for a visit to Babylon, mysterious Babylon! that mammoth city over which more than four thousand years have passed, nearly one-half thereof in dismal silence and desolation. We started, five in number, accompanied by two cavasses (body guards) and two native servants, all of us well mounted, on Saturday afternoon from Bagdad, in a due southerly direction on the road to Hillah. The sun was still high above the horizon when we issued from the gates of Bagdad, and gave us the full

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benefit of its scorching rays, as we emerged from beneath the last of the shady date trees which grow along the road, as far as it leads along the river; but we soon found ourselves on the barren plain. Knowing that we should have moonlight almost all through the night, we rode leisurely till about 7 P. M., when the fiery orb of day slowly and majestically disappeared behind the solitary chain of sandhills, at the uttermost edge of the western horizon, the summits of which retained their hue of burnished gold long after sunset. As soon as the moon rose we accelerated our pace, and after riding till about 9 o'clock over a perfectly flat, barren, and apparently quite uninhabited country, we heard the distant barking of various dogs, and soon after perceived about a mile ahead, the dark outlines of the khan, or caravanserai of Bironoos about twenty-two miles from Bagdad, where we gave our horses a few hours' rest. The night being beautifully clear and pleasant, and our company in the best spirits, we availed ourselves of this opportunity to look at the caravanserai. It is a large substantial brick building, about two hundred feet square, with walls about twenty feet in height, and over three feet thick. About fifteen feet above the ground, and all around the building was a row of loop holes, or small openings for the admittance of air and light, the only openings in the walls, except the ponderous iron bound wooden gate which stands open all day, but is shut in the evening. Above the door is an inscription in large, blue Arabic letter informing the reader that this khan or caravanserai was erected at the expense of a wealthy Persian merchant for the protection and shelter of weary travelers; a very sensible gift in a country where lawless bands of Bedouins continually prowl about the plains, to attack and plunder solitary travelers and

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small caravans, committing atrocious murders, sometimes even before the very gates of Bagdad. Shelter is very welcome both to man and beast, during the hottest part of the day, on the parched plains, where there is not a tree, not a building to afford shade, not a drop of water within many miles. The inside of the caravanserai consists of a series of vaulted rooms and corridors, where it is delightfully cool during the day, and where man and beast enjoy shelter from the scorching rays of the sun. A large square open to the sky occupies the centre of the building. In the middle of the square is a cistern or draw well some forty or fifty feet deep, from which the water is drawn by a leather bucket attached to a rope. From each corner of the interior of the building narrow stairs lead up to the flat roof, which, like that of all Arabian buildings, is used as a resting place at night. On the roof soon after sunset all the inmates regularly spread their carpets or straw mats, and retire to sleep, the heat issuing from the earth, rendering the atmosphere in these vaulted rooms so intensely hot toward evening that it is impossible to sleep down stairs; besides this, thousands of mosquitos, centipedes, scorpions, rats, mice, etc., emerge from the crevices of the walls, and from the earth as soon as the sun sets. Not one of these disagreeable creatures will molest roof sleepers, and there you can enjoy the gentle breath of a delightfully refreshing breeze, and the beauties of a starlight night, such as can be only enjoyed in Arabia and Lower Mesopotamia.

When our party arrived at the caravanserai the court-yard was filled with horses, mules, donkeys, and camels, many of them saddled and packed ready to continue their journey. We soon discovered that most of the inmates of the caravanserai were Persians, without

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having as yet seen any of them, they being nearly all asleep upon the roof. It is easy in Arabia to discover the creed and nationality of a traveler from the appearance and equipments of the animal he bestrides. The large number of mules in the yard; the numerous dachterwans (a kind of traveling sedan chair for ladies and invalids); the large pear shaped bells attached to the latter; the thick, bony, short-necked, and viscious horses, yelling, biting and kicking indiscriminately at each other; the peculiarities of their saddles and bridles, and the sonorous voice of some sleepy, but as yet invisible mukâree (muleteer) invoking in a strange tongue frightful curses on the noisy horses—all these things made us at once aware of the fact that the greater part of our fellow-travelers were Persians, accompained by many of the fair sex, engaged in a pilgrimage to Kērbela, or Mushed Hussein, the Mecca of the Persians, Afghans, Turcomans, many of whom cannot afford the journey to the real Mecca. The khan of Tuwibah is situated just at the point where the main road divides into two branches, that leading to the right is the direct road to Kērbela, and the left branch leads straight to Hillah. Kērbela lies about twenty-five miles southwest, and Hillah about twenty-five miles due south from this caravanserai. A curiosity to learn how far we were out of our reckoning in supposing the greater part of the inmates of the khan to be Persians, naturally induced us to go up stairs on the roof, or platform, where we well knew we should find them all, or nearly all sound asleep. When we reached the roof, we found it occupied by over two hundred people, male and female, young and old, stretched on their beds, carpets, or straw mats, some even on their abbas (traveling cloaks), saddles, and luggage, all apparently sound asleep. Except three Nubian slaves, nobody seemed to have

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noticed our arrival, and the promiscuous snoring of some of the sleepers did not diminish at all during our inspection of the roof. The three slaves were rather crouching than sitting near the stairs by which we ascended, two of them with their naked ebony backs of athletic forms turned toward us, were busily engaged in conversation in a foreign tongue in a scarcely audible undertone, while the third, who up to the time of our appearance had calmly listened to the two others, resumed the slow and long drawn pull at his almost neglected narghileh. His expressive and steady gaze at us did not fail to attract the attention of his two friends, who, turning half round on their haunches, eyed us for a moment, and then quietly resumed their conversation.

Though rather jovially disposed, we were anxious not to disturb the rest of our weary fellow travelers, so silently walked to the other end of the roof, as if in search of a comfortable place to lie down. Passing noiselessly along, we came first to about a dozen Armneians, who, with the exception of one or two old fellows, were all young men, and, to all appearance, native of Bagdad, and dealers in spices, as the strong odor of the contents of the packages serving them as pillows seemed to indicate. They were all fast asleep, and badly armed, as I saw but two or three double-barreled guns of cheap Belgian make, and a few single-barreled pop pistols in their possession. A little further on we came to a group of Jews, easily recognized in the beautifully clear moonlight by the peculiar features, which betray the members of the Hebrew race all over the world, and never to be mistaken whether you meet them in the eastern or western hemisphere. Some of the Jewish merchants were probably proceeding to Hillah, for the purpose of bartering with the Arabs of

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that neighborhood for antiques, which the latter continually excavate or pick upon the site of Ancient Babylon. Near them lay a Hebrew family, consisting, apparently, of a father, mother and two grown up daughters. The latter had, evidently, on going to rest, taken care not to remove their "pāgies"—the little square veils made of horse hair—not only in order to keep the glare of the moonlight from their faces, but also to avoid being gazed at by intruders while asleep. Unluckily their precautions were of no avail, for either they had found the heat too great, and had voluntarily unveiled themselves, or, while turning from side to side, the miserable stiff fabric must have slipped off. At any rate, we gazed upon the charming faces, whose peaceful, angelic expression was naturally heightened by the calm moonlight. The old lady alone, whom we easily recognized by the wrinkles on her hands and neck, had her veil fixed in its proper position. I was afraid that some of my jovial companions would cough, or by some means awaken and greatly scare the young sleeping beauties; but it seemed as if, for the moment, a sudden feeling of solemnity pervaded our whole party, and they were all so quiet that you might have heard a mosquito buzzing in the air.

None of the Jews were armed; at least there were no arms visible near them; in fact it is my belief that, as a rule, they never carry arms, and, when attacked, they will readily deliver up all they possess to save their lives. I have often traveled with Oriental Jews, and never noticed their bearing arms of any kind, but for what reason I cannot explain; for though the Hebrew of the present day has but very rarely made himself conspicuous by his valor and combativeness, the exploits of his ancestors, such as Saul, David, Sampson, etc., sufficiently prove that cowardice is not a hereditary

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evil of that nation. They seldom travel alone, but generally place themselves under the protection of caravans, or hire men to escort them. In the corner opposite that in which the three negroes were conversing and smoking, a portly Turkish officer, girded with sword and pistols, slept on a carpet, his horse's saddle serving him as a pillow, while around him, stretched on straw mats, were scattered six or eight dirty-looking soldiers in thread-bare uniforms, snoring away lustily, each with his hand on his saddle, and his musket within reach of his hand. Doubtless this small posse of men accompanied as an escort the four Turkish merchants, who slept closely surrounded by a heap of trunks, bags and other traveling gear, and who seemed to be men of wealth, judging from their bedding and the jewelry on their hands. Still further on, stretched on their Abbas (coarse woolen cloaks), lay the dark, half-naked forms of about twenty Bedouins, evidently the owners or in charge of numerous camels down in the yard, as their neglected beards and mustache, their coarse, loose dress, bare feet and wild appearance in general seemed to indicate, without mentioning their arms, consisting of a profusion of long lances, peculiarly-shaped Bedouin guns, with enormously long, thin barrels, fire-lock pistols, yataghans (curved swords), daggers, etc., all carefully placed close at hand, ready in case of an attack.

A great portion of the other end of the room was covered with sleepers of unmistakably Persian nationality, at least one hundred in number. Their stalwart forms, jet black hair, glossy beards and mustaches, the palms of their hands, and their finger nails stained with henna; their tall, sugar-loaf shaped hats of black lambskin, their tight fitting coats, wide trousers, richly colored stockings, and peculiar shaped canvas shoes, the well known short, straight, double-bladed swords,

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the long thin-barreled pistols, the sharp, bent, broad daggers, richly inlaid with silver or gold—all betrayed their origin. A kind of screen, built of trunks, cases, saddles, tents, cooking utensils, etc., separated them from their women and children, of whom there must have been at least fifty, judging from the space they occupied. Through the interstices of their temporary screen we could see several of the sleeping females, all of whom appeared to have their faces covered with white muslin veils. The Persian women are all ridiculously determined never to allow a stranger to see their features. In this respect they are far more particular than any other women of the Orient. Though we would have liked to draw a comparison between the looks of the two fair Jewish maidens, and some of the Persian beauties, we did not get a chance, and, therefore, thought it advisable to retreat as quietly as possible without delay; for though we were well armed, and not afraid of fighting, we well knew the vindictive and fanatic character of the Persians, especially when they fancy their women to have been insulted by unbelievers; moreover, they were at least twenty times our number. It was high time for us to retreat, for hardly had we gained the other end of the roof, when—bang, bang—went two shots in succession, which, of course, awoke every sleeper in the khan. Many of them, as they jumped to their feet, grasped their arms firmly, believing that the khan was attacked by Bedouins. They were, however, foolishly and unnecessarily scared by the ridiculous conceit of the young Armenian spice merchant, who, during our inspection of the sleepers, being thirsty, had risen, and, in advancing toward his leather water-bag lying on the wall, had seen some animal, probably a miserable jackal or desert wolf, prowling about the low shrubbery round the khan. Thinking no doubt that

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he might gain some credit by a good shot, he seized his $10 gun and blazed away.

It was about 2 A.M. when our cavasses informed us that our horses were ready to continue the journey, and, ten minutes afterward, we rode out of the gates of the khan, and advanced leisurely toward Hillah, where we expected to arrive before sunrise, as it was only about twenty-five miles distant from Tuweibah. The night was still beautifully clear, though the atmosphere was rather hot; a solemn stillness reigned over the desert, interrupted occasionally by the melancholy call of some invisible night-bird soaring through the air high above our heads. Sometimes we heard a bustling noise, and saw the shadows of a herd of fugitive gazelles, startled by our approach, vanish with the rapidity of the wind. Now and then we could see the dark outlines of a couple of jackals cunningly and distrustfully eyeing us from the top of some neighboring sandhill. Often, as our small cavalcade passed silently by, these wily animals stood in such tempting proximity to each other, as well as to us, that we could with difficulty abstain from trying a shot at them; but it had been agreed that no unnecessary shot should be fired under any pretence whatever during our night excursions, in order to avoid attracting the attention of marauding Bedouins, who prowl around the country in gangs of from five to fifty strong, on their matchless horses, in search of plunder, especially during the season of the Ramadan, the great fasting month of the Moslems, the time when the greatest number of Persian pilgrim caravans proceed to Kerbela. European travelers are, however, much less exposed to their attacks than any other people, partly because the Bedouins are well aware that Europeans when traveling through this country are always well armed, well escorted, and will generally show fight

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when attacked. In such cases they know well how to handle a rifle or revolver. The Bedouins know also that Europeans seldom travel through their country on business, but almost invariably for pleasure, and, therefore, seldom carry money or goods enough to counterbalance the risk of attacking them. The Bedouin is individually a coward, and only shows fight when in superior numbers; but the sight of a killed or wounded companion, or even a slight scratch on his own person, will reduce his courage at once to zero, and he disappears phantom-like on his fleet charger as suddenly as he came.

About half-way between Tuweibah and Hillah we arrived at the banks of a dried-up rivulet, a tributary of the Euphrates. When we were fully one hundred yards from this spot a most horrible stench offended our olfactory organs, which by experience we knew to be produced by some dead body, either human or animal, far advanced in decomposition lying near by, but where we could not tell at first. Soon after crossing the rivulet, we perceived about one hundred yards off on our right the dead bodies of two mules or horses lying in close proximity to each other, and surrounded by three or four large hyenas busily engaged in holding an inquest over them, attended by over fifty jackals, which last however kept at a respectful distance, anxiously waiting till their turn to feed should come. The tramp of our horses attracted their attention, whereupon they moved off *en masse*, reluctantly however, and with the evident intention of returning as soon as we should leave. The sight of this congregation of midnight prowlers was too much for Mr. P., who, forgetting our agreement that no shot should be fired during the night unless absolutely necessary, let fly at them, knocking one jackal over and wounding another.

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I don't know whether it was curiosity, or a providential warning which made our imprudent sportsman ride up to the spot where the jackal had fallen; but no sooner had he reached the place, than he observed two dead human bodies, lying between those of the horses, to which he called our attention. We rode within twenty yards of the dismal spot, but the horrible stench which made us sick and faint, and our horses nearly frantic, prevented our making any closer inspection. Though the bodies were partly reduced to skeletons, everything indicated that they had fallen victims to a gang of marauders; for not a vestige of clothing or equipments was left on them. The two unfortunate men lay side by side close to each other, both with their faces turned toward mother earth, as if the murderers had feared to meet the ghastly gaze of their victims. The sandy ground around still showed marks of a scuffle and numerous foot-prints of horses, while some broken sherba (earthen water-bowl) and a piece of rope made of goat's hair, was all the robbers left behind. The murder must have been committed at least a fortnight previous to our discovery. Unable any longer to endure the sickening atmosphere of the gloomy spot, we resumed our journey, thinking no more of the uncalled-for shot fired by our companion, but silently riding along, musing on the mournful scene we had just witnessed, some of us feeling rather sleepy, and none of the party seeming at all anxious for conversation. In order to keep myself awake, and to try to free myself from the disgusting odor that still seemed to haunt me, I made up my mind to enjoy a quiet smoke, in which I was joined by my friend J. Getting our sebils (a sort of short Arab tobacco pipe) ready, we called Mustapha, one of our cavasses, to give us a light, but in attempting to strike fire, he dropped the steel in the sand, and was obliged

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to dismount to look for it; but some time elapsed, however, before he recovered it, and this naturally made us fall back a little, but not more than two hundred yards behind the rest of the little cavalcade. As we approached the Euphrates, the country assumed a slightly undulated appearance, owing to a series of low mounds scattered here and there. I rode by the side of Mr. J., both of us quietly enjoying our pipes, and each absorbed in his own thoughts, when I once or twice fancied that I saw the head of a Bedouin rise above the top of a neighboring sand hillock, and instantly disappear again; but on straining my sleepy eyes steadily in that direction, I could see nothing but the bare sand. This led me to think I had perhaps mistaken some prowling jackal for the swarthy face of a Bedouin, and not liking to figure as a greenhorn or a coward in the opinion of my companions, I said nothing about it at the time. But we had hardly advanced two hundred yards further, before the same object again attracted my attention; rising slightly in my stirrups, I was certain this time I was not mistaken, and that what I had thought might be a jackal was really the head of a man covered with the usual brown, coarse koffich worn by Bedouins in this country. I at once confided my suspicions to my friend J.; but no sooner had I opened my mouth than Mustapha, who rode by my side, though not understanding a word I said, must have accidentally cast a glance in the same direction, for he suddenly wheeled round, and the next moment we saw him going full tilt straight towards the little hillock not more than one hundred yards distant, on our left, and stopping his horse abruptly when on the summit of the ridge, fired two pistols in quick succession. In an instant we were by his side, and just arrived in time to see eighteen or twenty

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Bedouins thunder over the plain at their utmost speed, the bright gun-barrels and the blades of their lances flashing in the clear moonlight, and finally fading away in the distance. Never in my life have I seen horsemen go at such speed. In less than half a minute they were out of shot range. Not so the swarthy scoundrel who acted as scout for the lawless gang. His horse must have been wounded by Mustapha's shot, for though we could see that the vagabond did his best to accelerate his speed, we could easily have overtaken and dispatched him had we not been afraid that the precipitate flight of the others was only a "ruse de guerre" to separate us from the rest of our companions, and thus draw us into ambush, a dodge often practiced by these wily scoundrels. Even if this had been their intention, the cowardly vagabonds must have expected a sound volley from our rifles and revolvers; for in their hurried flight they leaned far over the right-hand side of their horses, so that no part of their bodies remained visible; and in this awkward position scattered in every direction, and changed every moment the frantic course of their horses, so as to prevent our taking steady aim at them. This little incident had the effect of curing all the members of the party of their drowsiness in wonderfully quick time; the main body of our expedition not knowing what was the matter, had speedily joined us, arriving just in time to witness the disappearance of the fugitives in the distance.

Of course we all complimented Mustapha (who by the way felt as proud as a peacock) upon his acuteness, prompt action, and courage, for which we promised him a fine bākshish (gratuity) in the shape of a revolver he ardently coveted, and which was presented to him on our return to Bagdad. Though we knew the same vagabonds would not dare to show themselves again

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that night, we thought it advisable thenceforth to ride close together. Mustapha subsequently related to us several incidents much like the above, most of which had been witnessed by himself in different parts of Arabia, Syria and Mesopotamia, whereby he became well acquainted with the numerous dodges employed by marauding Bedouins to secure their prey. He stated that in our case he accidentally espied the head of the swarthy villain slightly protruding over the summit of the low range of sand hills, and instantly perceiving the full extent of the danger of being surprised, and cut off from our friends, judged that this dilemma could only be counterbalanced by turning the tables, and surprising our would-be-surprisers, knowing by experience the effect of a few well directed shots upon the nerves of a gang of cowardly Bedouins suddenly surprised, he proceeded forthwith to make practical use of his experience.

At 4 A. M. we reached Mahawal, an old dilapidated caravanserai situated between two little tributaries of the Euphrates, and only about a mile from the Shatt en Nil, an old neglected canal probably contemporary with the ruins of Babylon and connecting the Euphrates a little above Babylon, with the Tigris a little below Koot al Hamāra. In Mahawal however we only stopped long enough to give Mustapha time to report to the inmates of the khan that bad characters were prowling about the neighborhood, of which they seemed to be aware, as they had kept a vigilant look-out all night from the top of the caravanserai. Learning that we had come across the dead bodies of two men, and two horses, lying in the dry rivulet between Tuweibah and this khan, we were informed that they knew about them, and that the unfortunate men were Armenians from Hillah bound for Bagdad. They were

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a part of a small caravan which had passed Mahawal a fortnight previously. These poor fellows had evidently, like ourselves, unconsciously straggled a little behind, been attacked, and cut off from the rest of the caravan, killed and rifled, undoubtedly, by the same gang which had an eye upon us. Just as day began to break we crossed the old canal above referred to. The upper end of this canal appears in other times to have formed the northern part of the huge ditch which is said to have surrounded the walls of Babylon. We had hardly crossed this canal, when the distant crowing of numerous cocks, the loud and angry barking of huge Bedouin dogs, and the discordant voice of a sleepless donkey greeted our ears; I say greeted, because these are in fact welcome sounds (though far from being harmonious) to the weary traveler after a long night's journey on horseback. They are always striking proofs that human beings are not far off, who will either for the sake of hospitality or money provide for the comfort of both man and beast. This feeling of satisfaction I always experienced, especially while traveling in India, Arabia, Mesopotamia, and South Africa, where the heat of the atmosphere during the day necessitates journeying by night, and it would be difficult to describe with what feelings of joy my horse and myself welcomed these well known sounds, when weary, hungry, thirsty and sleepy, we came within reach of the voices of these animal dilletanti. The repeated morning call of these creatures did not fail to make us espy a number of small black Bedouin tents, pitched close upon the banks of the canal, some six hundred yards to the left of the road. Toward these tents we directed our horses' steps, thereby increasing the fury of the peculiarly savage dogs, until an old gray haired Bedouin almost in a state of nudity emerged from one of the tents, and by dint of angry words,

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and a few well directed-bows, managed to impose silence upon the infuriated curs. He then advanced stealthily toward us, and going through the customary movement of slightly touching his forehead with the tips of the fingers of his right hand, gave us the usual salutation "Salāam Aleīkum" (my salutation to you, or, my welcome to you), which salute we returned, accompanied by the same motion of the hand, by our "Aleīkum Salāam" (our salute to you, or we thank you).

After this short introduction Mustapha proceeded to explain to him that the Frankees came to see the "dead city," and wanted a man to pilot them about the country. To ask them to show you the sites of the different buildings of the fallen mammoth city mentioned in history or to give you information concerning them would be nonsense, as they know no more about the history of Babylon than an American Indian. All they can show you is the probable extent of the former city, where, and what sort of antiques have been found in its precincts. With regard to the latter, however, they are naturally rather reserved, eyeing every foreigner arriving with suspicion, and generally regarding him as an intruder, intent upon digging for antiques, and in this way robbing them of their livelihood, and of what they consider their absolute birthright. This feeling of competition is so strong that it renders the inhabitants of this district rather averse to visitors of any kind, and it is therefore not advisable for travelers to visit this spot, unless in company with several others, well armed, and escorted. But as we offered to pay liberally for any antiques we should carry away with us, even if we picked them up ourselves; upon this the old man's scruples were all done away with, and he was quite ready to give us one of his sons as a guide through the ruins, evidently in the

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firm belief that the Frankees would pick up every fragment of brick in the road themselves, and then pay him handsomely for the trouble they had been to. In this reckoning, however, he was slightly mistaken, as the Frankees would not pick up nearly as much of the rubbish strewed over the ground as he expected.

During our conversation nearly all the inmates of the fifteen or twenty tents had risen from their beds, about a dozen sleepy and dirty looking men, wrapped only in their abbas, or coarse brown woolen cloaks, stood gazing at us, while a goodly number of slender legged boys, stark naked, with their long shaggy black hair in wild confusion, kept off the still threatening curs and inquisitive goats. By and by some old women and girls made their appearance clad in long brown, blue, or dark red shirts, which hung loosely on their shoulders, reaching nearly to their feet, and thus composed their only garment. Some of the younger damsels might have been very decent looking if they had undergone a thorough process of washing and combing; however, they did not seem very anxious to improve their appearance, as they proceeded at once to bring water, not for washing, but for cooking purposes, and to milk the cows and goats about the tents. Having heard that it would take us a least till noon to be shown over the ruins, we arranged it so that our two servants, and Ali, our second cavass, should proceed at once to Hillah, about six miles off, and deliver a letter of introduction, which we carried with us, to Hadjee Mohamed ebn Said Ahmed, a wealthy Arab merchant, and business acquaintance of my brother, who, according to the Arab hospitality, would of course forthwith place his house at our disposal. There they should arrange things as comfortably as possible, and have a good dinner ready for us upon our arrival, which we fixed

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at 11 o'clock A. M. As an additional protection, two men of these tents were to accompany them on horseback, fully armed, to Hillah, and on our arrival there were to receive five Turkish piasters (about twenty-five cents American money) each, while our guide should receive for his services ten piastres in Hillah. After partaking of a hasty breakfast consisting of cold fowl, basterman (a kind of highly peppered sun-dried raw meat resembling the beldong of the Dutch Boors in South Africa), fresh milk, and backsam (a kind of hard, brown biscuit), which provisions we had brought from Bagdad in our saddle bags, we all started again, Ali, with the two servants and the two Bedouins, going due south, straight toward Hillah, and we, accompanied by Mustapha and the guide, going in an easterly direction across the plain.

The sun was just rising, and beautifully illuminated the apparently endless plain, limited only toward the east by a long and singularly regular hill, about eighty feet in height, and seeming to be very steep. We made straight toward it at a brisk canter, over perfectly level ground, overgrown in some parts with low shrubbery, in others with patches of scanty grass, while in the direction of the river, and that of the canal also, where the soil was probably more moist, and consequently more productive, the country appeared to be under good cultivation, and covered with immense fields of barley (the main article of cultivation in Arabia and Mesopotamia), Indian corn, water-melons, etc. After riding about five miles, we arrived at the foot of the hill, the peculiar shape of which was not as striking as when we saw it at a distance; hitherto we had hardly spoken a word, but when we came to a halt at the foot of the hill, the guide and Mustapha jumped from their horses as if by mutual consent, quietly

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motioning us to do the same. The idea struck us that it was high time to make them understand that we did not come from Bagdad to see if our horses could climb the steep hills out here, but that we came to see the ruins of Babylon.

Our Bedouin guide was struck with astonishment at this sudden remark. He actually seemed spell-bound, unable to utter a word, and with mouth wide open stood contemplating, with unfeigned horror, our unpardonable ignorance. Mustapha, however, broke the spell by quietly remarking that these were part of the ruins of "the dead city," at the same time pointing to the top of the imaginary hill. It was now our turn to look foolish, and I have no doubt we did, staring at each other, as if we wished to receive an indelible impression of each other's faces. But there could be no doubt on the subject, for Mustapha was never heard to tell a lie (a rare virtue in a cavass, by the by), and he made the remark so quietly that we knew it must be the truth. We dismounted, and with difficulty ascended the exceedingly steep side of the questionable hill, till we reached the top. Our horses, led by the bridle, found no difficulty in following us. All Arab horses, being peculiarly sure-footed, are sagacious in climbing or descending slopes. Finally we reached the summit, and, in this elevated position, it was not difficult to see that what we had hitherto taken for a hill was in reality nothing less than part of the relics of the mammoth walls of ancient Babylon; for though interrupted, or leveled to the ground for miles and miles, we could clearly trace their former course. They must have formed a regular parallelogram, two sides of which must have run in a due south-east direction, parallel with, and the other two at right angles with the course of the Euphrates, which magnificent river we

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could distinctly see about three miles to the right, silently but proudly displaying its smooth, silvery surface to our delighted gaze. On the western or right bank of the river we spied the motley camp of a tribe of Shammr Bedouins, numbering over three thousand tents, manufactured, as they all are, of black or brown coarse cloth of goat's hair, or sheep's wool. These low, dark-colored tents would have afforded a rather gloomy and disagreeable appearance to an inexperienced beholder, had it not been for the great number of human beings, the immense herds of camels, horses, donkeys, water buffaloes, cows, oxen, sheep, etc., scattered by the thousand all round the temporary city of tents. We also saw Hillah, which lay about six miles further down from the spot where the Bedouins camped, on the same bank, and a short distance below one of the numerous lovely bends of the glorious river, which are said to have given the main charm to Babylon; famous, according to tradition, as one of the most imposing, and at the same time most picturesque cities of the then known world. The country round us presented a strange aspect. The territory to our right, all along the Euphrates, looked beautifully fertile and cheerful, while that on the left was nothing but a barren desert, with hardly any vegetation as far as the eye could reach.

After having enjoyed the view from the top of this mound for some time, we descended into the plain, which, by the way, was more difficult than the ascent, and, following our guide, cantered leisurely across the barren ground, toward another mound, situated not more than a mile from the Euphrates, almost in the centre of the supposed limits of Babylon. This mound is not as high as the one we had just left, but perfectly level on the top, and of considerable extent, measuring

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at least two square miles. From its very central position, its great extent, its almost regular form, and the fact that the Arabs excavate from this mound more valuable antiques than from any other, I formed the idea that it must be the site of some former palace or temple. Perhaps here stood the gigantic palace of Nebuchadnezzar. Sites of this mound are perforated with holes dug by the Arabs or Bedouins in search of antiques or treasures. The poor devils are often amply repaid for their trouble, as they occasionally find really valuable objects, such as gold, silver and copper coins, rings, engraved stones, and cylinders (a kind of cylindrical shaped stone bead, generally from one to two inches long and from one to two inches in circumference). These cylinders are usually of black, white, brown or slate-colored stone, nicely polished, and engraved with wonderful accuracy, with human figures, such as gods, goddesses, kings, queens, warriors, tradesmen, women, animals or letters in the Assyrian or Chaldean language. There is a little hole, running longitudinally through each of them, a clear proof that they must have been worn as beads or ornaments round the neck, arms, wrists or ankles, probably by both sexes, as some of those found are so large and heavy that they could not have been worn by women. A great many of these cylinders are sold in Bagdad at fancy prices, varying from five piastres to five hundred, according to the quality of their workmanship, and state of preservation. While we were examining this mound, we caught sight of a few Arabs clad in tattered garments, busily engaged in exploring a hole recently dug in the eastern side of this mound. When we rode up to them, they exhibited to us a quantity of antiques, part of which had just been picked up, consisting of various engraved cylinders, curiously shaped finger and

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ear-rings, bracelets, a small bronze lamp of peculiar shape, and blueish green color, fragments of earthen jugs, gold, silver and copper coins, and a small brazen statue, representing a human figure, sitting on a chair or throne. We bought some of these curiosities at a comparatively low figure; the Arabs also offered us some large bricks for sale, that they had recently dug up, each of them bearing an inscription in the Chaldean language, which impression was yet wonderfully distinct and well-preserved, in spite of the vast age of the bricks. Owing to their great size and weight, we were obliged to decline buying.

On leaving this spot our guide took us to a kind of valley, perfectly equal in breadth from one end to the other, and leading in a southeast direction, straight towards the Euphrates. This valley is apparently about two thousand yards long, but its depth does not exceed fifteen feet below the level of the plane. It is bordered here and there by mounds of inferior size, and overgrown with scanty grass and low shrubbery. The bottom of the valley is perfectly level, and also overgrown in some parts with shrubbery. out of which we started now and then, during our progress, a brace or more of the beautiful black and yellow spotted Frankolin, or Mesopotamian partridge, so extremely plentiful on the borders of the Euphrates and the Tigris. This apparent valley is unmistakably the work of human hands, and over two thousand years ago probably formed one of the streets or canals traversing the immense city. When we arrived on the banks of the Euphrates we spied a few miles further down the river another mound of considerable size, boldly standing out into the river, thereby causing it to make a large circuit round the huge mound, from the top of which we resolved to take a final view of the place. From this elevated spot we

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were enabled to overlook not only the whole site of Babylon on this side of the Euphates, but also of that part of the city that lay on the other or right bank of the river; of the ruins of the latter, however, there are scarcely any traces left, the greater part of them at the time of our visit being covered by the innumerable tents of a subdivision of the Shammr Bedouins tribe, with all the paraphernalia of nomadic life. The remainder of the ruins visible from the top of the mound presented more or less the same character as those already described. I must confess we were greatly disappointed in our visit to the ruins of Babylon, if I may be allowed to dignify the few remaining unsightly mounds of yellow clay and sand, the only witnesses to mark its former grandeur, by the name of ruins. I am sure all European and American visitors to the place prior to and after our visit have been and will be equally disappointed. I had always imagined that some gigantic walls of former palaces, the debris of some vast columns or monuments, or some considerable portion of the remains of the huge Suspension Gardens of Nebuchadnezzar at least ought to be visible; but no! with the exception of the few mounds looking just like ordinary hills, and two or three straight passages between these mounds, resembling natural little valleys, not a trace is left to immortalize the oldest city on record, the first stone or rather brick of which was laid according to the traditions of the Holy Bible more than four thousand years ago. How different has been the fate of Babylon, from the cyclopean built pyramids of Geezeh, and those of Sakkārah from venerable Thebes, from mysterious Suxor, from awe-inspiring Baalbec (Heliopolis), and from majestic Palmyra (Tadmour). Though of comparatively the same age, their ruins are and probably will be for centuries dumb, and yet loudly speaking

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witnesses of former glory and splendor, while Babylon, the mother and queen of cities, has long since ceased to exist, leaving hardly a trace of former life except in the annals of History, and over the ground formerly trodden by the gorgeous court of queenly Semiramis, by the triumphal corteges of warlike Nebuchadnezzar, and by the invincible legions of Alexander the Conqueror, now steal in utter solitude the vagrant Bedouins, the timid gazelle, the wily jackal and the cowardly hyena, afraid almost of their own shadow.

Slowly continuing our route along the left river bank we arrived about noon opposite the little town of Hillah. Here we had to wait till the lazy gooffajees (proprietors of gooffas, a kind of Arab boat) from the other river bank choose to fetch us in their awkward looking craft. The sun stood almost at its zenith, and shone upon us with relentless power. Happily, the gooffajees soon made their appearance, and paddled us across, one by one, without accident; but one of the horses, getting dizzy from the spinning motion of the gooffa boldly jumped overboard and swam across, arriving in Hillah before the gooffa, which should have carried him over. After the unavoidable quarrel with the gooffajess regarding the bakshish or gratuity (every tourist through Oriental countries knows this to be one of the chief annoyances of eastern traveling) was settled, we rode through the town toward the house to which we were piloted by our servants, who had been anxiously awaiting our arrival on the river bank. We found a sumptuous dinner ready for us. Our host, Hadjee Mohamed ebu Said Ahmed, an old shrivelled, silver-bearded Arab, dressed in a long purple gown, green waistcoat gaudily embroidered, white muslin shirt, loose white trousers carefully gathered at the ankle, white turban embroidered with gold, and

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carmine colored leather slippers with upturned points, was indeed a most gorgeously attired individual. He received us with a deep salaam, almost prostrating himself before us, and profuse in his acknowledgments of the unspeakable honor done him by our visit. With the proverbial hospitality of the Arab, he placed his whole house at our disposal, and could only with much difficulty be persuaded to set down with us upon his own divan, and share with us his own provisions. We enjoyed a hearty dinner of roast lamb, roast fowls, pellauw, ragout, eggs, wild honey, cheese, water melons, grapes, oranges, etc. After dinner, sherbet (a kind of sweet lemonade), delicious coffee in tiny silver cups, called fenthans by the Arabs, and pipes with fragrant tobacco were served. After this we took a nap till four o'clock in the afternoon, by which time the sultry atmosphere, which had been heightened during the day by the suffocating samoom, or southerly wind from the desert, had cooled down, Notwithstanding the oppressive heat and swarms of flies, we had slept soundly for several hours, attended closely by the servants of the house, who gently waved large fans over our faces while we slept. At five P. M. we all turned out to take a look at the town. We wandered through a labyrinth of narrow, crooked, dusty, and filthy lanes, winding between a confusion of low, dark, dirty, wretched-looking, flat-roofed houses, the walls of which were mostly built of sun-dried mud, mixed with short cut straw. The greater part of the houses were not over twelve feet high. Now and then we passed a mosque, a lofty minaret, a dilapitated khan or caravanserai, or a series of vast camel stables without roofs, from which emanated a strong, but not disagreeable odor peculiar to "the ship of the desert," which

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only inhabits these stables during the night. The best houses in Hillah are situated near the river; some of them are even built of sun-dried bricks and wood, twenty or thirty feet in height, and short chenashils. Prominent among these houses stands the residence of the Mayor, or representative of the Turkish government, a spacious square building with a large open court-yard in the centre, looking like a caravanserai. The building is dark and gloomy, and only recognisable as the residence of the Governor of the place by the number of ragged Turkish soldiers, and dirty, drowsy, slovenly-looking cavasses lounging about the premises. It is situated on the river bank, and affords a beautiful view on the left bank opposite. In its immediate neighborhood stand two or three casernes, or soldiers' barracks. These are large brick buildings, but with their strongly iron-barred windows, they look more like prisons than soldiers' homes. During the night about two thousand Turkish soldiers are stowed away in these buildings. At the time of our visit, however, nearly all of them were down at the river, some occupied in washing their linen, others in bathing themselves, neither of all these occupations being at all superfluous with these wretched Turkish soldiers.

Hundreds of women, girls, and boys, the two former clad only in a long coarse woolen shirt of dark brown, red, or dark blue color, reaching nearly to their ankles; the boys almost in a state of nudity, walked slowly but very erect to and from the river, adroitly balancing their big earthen water-jugs or urns on the top of their heads and shoulders. Though the long shirt was the only garment most of the female sex wore, their ears, foreheads, necks, wrists, fingers, and, with some of them, even the noses, ankles and toes were adorned with ornaments of glass, ivory, brass, silver, or gold.

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The fair sex did not, like their sisters of Bagdad, wear the pagee or horse-hair veil. They wore no veil at all. Some of the younger ones, though shamefully neglecting their complexions as well as their long jet-black hair of luxuriant growth, were quite good-looking, reminding me of Rebecca of the Bible, who, about 3725 years ago, carried her water-jug in exactly the same way as her Arabian sisters carry it now, and who is represented by artists in the same costume as that worn by the females of the present day, Rebecca according to the Bible having been a native of Mesopotamia.

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XII.

"ROUGHING IT."

"Date marks."—Pirates—Nimrod's Well.—Kerbela.—A Feat of Horsemanship.—A Hot Chase.

The water of the Euphrates is as clear as crystal, but, in spite of this, it is not nearly as soft as the muddy water of the Tigris, which, when properly filtered, is certainly the best water I ever drank, though some of the inhabitants of Bagdad give it an exceedingly bad character. This is owing to a horrid boil, or kind of ulcer, peculiar to certain countries situated between the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean; this sore or ulcer is the terror of all the cities or villages infested with it, and is called by the European residents of Bagdad "the date mark," and by the Arabs "ocht mal dammr," which means "sister of the date," they averring that these ulcers are produced by eating dates. The French residents simply give them what I think the most appropriate name, "Boutons de Bagdad," *i.e.*, Bagdad boils, not being able to account with any certainty for their origin. These disgusting ulcers make their appearance on the bodies of the natives, when the latter are still in their infancy, generally when they are from one to two years old. Foreigners, no matter of what nation, sex, age, or mode of life, are attacked by them after a residence of from one to twelve months from their first arrival in Bagdad. They generally appear on the face, especially on the cheeks and forehead, on the surface of the hand, seldom in the palm, on the fingers, elbows, haunches, thighs, knees and feet, in the shape of a very minute, though brilliantly red spot, no

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longer than a flea-bite. These red spots grow larger and larger every day, though exceedingly slow, sometimes taking several months to increase to the size of a split pea, which they do without causing the slightest pain. But after the lapse of six to nine months, according to the constitution of the afflicted, when they have reached their climax, they slowly suppurate, become very painful, and eject henceforth a sort of greenish yellow, sticky fetid matter, slowly but continually flowing day and night. While in this state, the unhappy victim afflicted with them undergoes a kind of martyrdom, and deserves sympathy indeed. If he puts on a bandage to hide the disgusting object from view, in the course of an hour it will become stiffened by the discharge, so that he will be obliged either to cut off the bandage round the ulcer, or tear it off, causing intense agony; and he cannot use water to moisten it, as it is generally believed that the contact of water, either warm or cold, will but increase its enormity and delay its cure. On the other hand, if the ulcer is not bandaged, the slightest friction will cause the most acute agony; every article of clothing and bedding will be covered with the fetid discharge; the dust will get into the wound, swarms of flies will be attracted to it, causing it to smart most painfully. By this time it has attained the size of from half an inch to two inches in diameter, and the smell is almost unendurable, so that I have known persons of delicate health vomiting and fainting from the smell of their own sores. Strange to say, with the exception of the nausea caused by the odor of the ulcer, and the pain caused by the accidental touch of it, the person afflicted feels in perfect health all the time, and eats, drinks, and sleeps just as well as ever.

After the lapse of two or three months, the ejection of matters decreases slowly, and finally stops alto-

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gether, and the ulcer dries up by degrees, covering itself with a thick, rough, yellowish gray crust, which by and by drops off, leaving a brown scar which never entirely disappears, and will always be visible as a reddish or bluish spot or scar in cold weather, or when the part which has been affected is bathed in cold water, as long as the person lives. I myself possess for life sixteen of these date marks; therefore I have had ample opportunity to watch them from beginning to end.

Whoever succeeds in discovering an effectual preventive against this direful scourge will not only confer a great boon on the inhabitants of this country, but will be a rich man, and whose name will endure as long as the Nile and Tigris flow. What would not many a wealthy pasha pay, if he could prevent this dreadful scourge from disfiguring the lovely faces of the younger beauties of his harem? What would not many a wealthy European or native husband pay, if he could insure the radiant face of his young and lovely wife, or the angelic features of his darling little child against the ravages of this scourge of the country, which, though not deadly, leaves indelible marks scarcely less horrid than those of the small-pox.

A great deal of course depends upon the position of the ulcer and its size; the most fatal spot for them to appear is on the tip of the nose, in which case they frequently disfigure this prominent feature terribly and forever, by eating away part of the cartilage, as cancer does. It is also very distressing if they break out near the eyes, as they are apt to contract the skin, thereby dilating the eyelids, and thus impart perhaps forever a horrid, wildly staring look painful to behold. Persons who bear the date mark on the chin, jaw, lips or scalp will never have any hair on the place occupied by the

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scar. Though date marks, as the English baptize them, do not improve the looks of anybody, they are of less importance to the male than to the female sex, to whom personal attractions are naturally more valuable. Unfortunately, it is a remarkable fact that with the fair sex these horrid marks seem to delight in appearing on the face, while among men they mostly show themselves on the hands, arms, and legs. Persons of robust health, and abundance of rich blood, generally have more and larger date marks than weak or sickly persons; some have as many as forty; some only a single one, or two or three of them. Strange to say of all the inhabitants of Bagdad, the native Christians suffer the most from this scourge. Next to them the Moslems, especially the negroes, on whom they leave ghastly slate-colored scars. Then the European residents, and lastly the Jews. Why the latter are the least affected by date marks I cannot tell, but it is a fact admitted by all the inhabitants of Bagdad. The cause of these ulcers nobody knows as yet; some ascribe them to the eating of dates, some to the Tigris waters, some to the samoom or hot desert wind, and others to the bite of some insect; but what insect they cannot tell. In my opinion their appearance has nothing to do with eating dates, as I can testify in my own case I was forewarned, and therefore forearmed, and did not eat or touch a single date, either dried or fresh, until I saw that two date marks had already appeared on my hands. Nor can the Tigris water or the "samoom" be the cause, for a Carara, a wretched little town situated only about two miles lower down the river, none of the inhabitants, unless they have lived for more than a week in Bagdad, can show a date mark on their bodies, nor can anybody else within three hundred miles up or

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down the river, though they all drink Tigris water and are fanned by the same wind as the inhabitants of Bagdad. Bassorah, at the mouth of the Shatt al Arab, or joint waters of the Tigris and Euphrates, is as notorious for date marks as Bagdad, where everybody has got or will get them; while in Gorna or Corna, situated on the same river, they are unknown. Between Bagdad and Mossul, which latter town is also on the banks of the Tigris, the date mark is never seen; in Mossul it is plentiful; between Mossul and Diarbekir on the same river, it is also unknown, though in the latter place it is very frequent. On the other hand date marks are known in places far away from the banks of the Tigris,—in Kerbela for instance, situated in the desert, sixty miles from the Tigris, and twenty from the Euphrates,—in Aleppo, on a table land nearly two hundred miles from the Tigris it is almost universal. Something similar to, if not the same as the date mark, is what the English call the Egyptian boil, which is met with more or less all over Egypt. For my part, I am inclined to believe that the date mark is caused by the bite or sting of an insect, probably of some sort of fly yet unknown, similar to, though not as fatal in its ravages as the "tsetse" fly in certain districts in South Africa (vide Livingstone's Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa), whose sting is certain death to horse, cow, ox, goat, sheep, dog, etc., though perfectly harmless to man, mule, donkey, elephant, rhinoceros, etc. Though every resident, native as well as foreigner, is sure to have them, nobody has ever been known to die in consequence of date marks, which by the by appear not to confine themselves to the human species, as I have seen them frequently on the nose, ears and lips of dogs, cats, horses, sheep, and goats; but they do not

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seem to suffer any bad effects from them. Among the European residents in Bagdad, Mossul, Diarbekir and Aleppo these dreaded marks are considered the stamp of acclimation, and as frequently form the topics of conversation as the state of the weather does in Europe or America.

On our way back to our headquarters we took a stroll through the bazaar. Hillah, though a small town of not more than about twenty thousand inhabitants, mostly Arabs and Turkish troops, boast of a tolerably extensive bazaar. This is chiefly owing to its being located so near the desert, in consequence of which it does a brisk trade with the numerous Bedouin tribes inhabiting the latter, to whom the merchants of Hillah sell cloths, provisions, jewelry, saddlery, arms, ammunition, etc., in exchange for camels, horses, donkeys, goats, sheep, sheep's wool, goat's hair, camel's hair, etc. Hillah is said to have been built about A.D. 1100, but has since then been captured, pillaged, and devastated by Bedouin and other hoards, and rebuilt again a great many times. Several attempts have been made by Europeans, especially the English, to explore the Euphrates, which is said to be navigable for river steamers, not drawing over five feet of water, from its confluence with the Tigris at Corna, as far up as Biradshig, or Birachich, on the left bank of the river, forty miles west of the town of Urfa, or Orfa, and sixty miles northeast of Aleppo. The last expedition for that purpose left Bagdad a few years ago, under command of Captain S., then commander of the little British gunboat Comet, on the Tigris. Several friends of the captain joined the expedition, among them were the French Consul, and my brother, more to satisfy curiosity than anything else. The gunboat brought them safely from Bagdad down to Corna, whence they

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ascended the Euphrates. All went well, till they reached Semauwa, one of the four abandoned Turkish forts at the confluence of the waters of the Chor Allah, with the Euphrates, on the right river bank, when the steamer ran aground, sprung a leak, and was obliged to stop for several hours to repair damages. Toward evening she was suddenly attacked by several hundred Bedouins, who fired on the crew and passengers, from the banks, killing two of the former, and wounding several others, until Captain S., who had been taken by surprise, returned the compliment by giving them several broadsides of grape shot, which brought down a good number of the assailants, causing the remainder to fly in confusion, carrying their killed and wounded with them. The attack took place at a spot where the river is very narrow, and the banks densely covered with shrubbery and tall grass, so that the Bedouins could easily approach without being noticed, and blaze away at the crippled gunboat. They were all mounted, but left many of their horses dead and wounded on the bank. They had evidently watched the little steamer, which carried only about thirty persons all told, and, having suspected her crippled condition, resolved upon attacking her, and after destroying the Frankies, to board and plunder her, in which intention they were foiled by not being aware that any such ugly playthings as grape and canister existed. The leak was repaired, and the steamer continued her journry upwards, but ran every now and then on a sand bank, which so disgusted the captain that he promptly returned with her to Bagdad.

Between eight and ten miles south of Hillah lies a wretched little Aarb village, composed of eighteen or twenty mud walled huts, inhabited by from eighty to a hundred people. This little village is called by the

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Arabs, Birs Nimrood (Nimrod's Well), and is said by historians to occupy the very spot where nearly five thousand years ago the world famed tower of Babel stood; but I need hardly say not the slightest trace is left of that famous building. The village is situated on a little promontory of the eastern border of Lake Hindija, a sweet lake connected on its northern end by an old canal with the river Euphrates, from which it derives its water. The lake is about forty miles long by eight miles broad. On its southern bank by the ruins of Koofa, (not to be confounded with Akr Koof near the Median wall), of these ruins, also there is hardly any trace left, though Koofa was contemporary with Ctesiphon and Seleucia, and like them was formerly one of the largest cities of Lower Mesopotamia. A little stream not more than five miles long connects Lake Hindija with Bahr Nedjef, a lake or rather a swamp of somewhat larger extent than the former. On the northern bank of this lake lies the Arab village of Mushed Ali, five miles southwest of Koofa, and on its southern bank the little village of Shinafiēh, where there is an outlet of about fifteen miles in length, for the water of Bahr Nedjef to run into a third lake or swamp, called Chor Allah by the natives, situated a little to the southeast of the two former lakes, but slightly inferior to them both in size and depth, which finally returns its waters to the Euphrates, near the four little abandoned Turkish forts, Dshera, Semanwa, Kiran and Grahim, by means of a narrow stream, also about fifteen miles in length. The two last named lakes or swamps lie in a slightly hollow, partly sandy, partly swampy plain, still bearing traces of having in former days been traversed by numerous canals in all directions. This circumstance makes me believe that these lakes are only the natural consequence of the choking up of

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these canals, formerly used to irrigate the country, which would prove these lakes to be of comparatively recent date, as it must have taken centuries for the mud to choke these large canals. Each of the three lakes, but especially the deepest of them, Lake Hindija, is exceedingly rich in fish, introduced by the waters of the Euphrates, which river contains fish weighing as much as a hundred pounds. The borders of the lakes, especially the two latter, are very swampy, covered with tall reeds, the place of refuge of innumerable pelicans, flamingos, cranes, geese, ducks, snakes, turtles, etc., the former rise in immense numbers when startled by a gun shot. The country all round is perfectly flat, devoid of trees, but affording pasture to immense herds of camels, horses, donkeys, water buffaloes, oxen, cows, goats and sheep, belonging to the Montefik, and Shamme Bedouins, whose black tent villages may be seen scattered in numerous camps all over the endless flats, where they live in happy unconsciousness of the trouble of the rest of the universe, on the produce of the vast herds, and the spoils of the chase. In fact their life is as free and independant as the eagle in the clouds.

About thirty miles northwest of Hillah, and about fifteen miles southwest of the Euphrates, built on both sides of a little tributary of the latter, lies the small, but important town of Kerbela or Mushed Hussein, *i. e.*, the mosque of Hussein, named after the prophet Hussēin or Hāssan, who is highly revered, especially by the Persians, Turkomans and Afghans, and who, they assert, is buried there. Kerbela, therefore, stands little below Mecca, with the three just mentioned nations, as regards its importance as a place of worship and pilgrimage. Every true believer of Persian, Turkoman, or Afghan descent, however poor he may be, tries to make a pilgrimage to that happy place at least once in

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his lifetime, if he cannot afford the far more expensive journey to Mecca; and wealthy persons spend enormous sums of money to have deceased members of their family embalmed, packed and sent off by caravans to Kerbela for burial. Not only are dead bodies sent there by members of the three above-named nations residing in Bassorah, Bagdad etc., but they arrive even from Cabool, Teheran, Isphahan, Hamadân, Shiras, Kirmanshāh and other places, two hundred to one thousand miles from Kerbela. Owing to the long journeys of from one to three months of the rough coffins lashed together over the back of a horse, mule or camel, the greater part of this horrid human freight is literally knocked to pieces before the caravan arrives at Kerbela. I once had the bad luck, while on horseback near Bagdad with some of my friends, to meet one of these funeral caravans, and the disagreeable odor emanating from it, though the bodies were all supposed to be embalmed, was so dreadful that we almost fainted, and readily gave the caravan a wide berth. The Persians mukāries or mule drivers had evidently no very sensitive olfactories, for they jogged along in the sickening atmosphere apparently as comfortable as possible, humming their monotonous songs, or smoking their pipes; nay, we actually saw one of them eating his frugal breakfast, consisting of coarse bread and dried dates, amid this sepulchral aroma, with as much appetite as any exquisite of the Fifth Avenue Hotel in New York could enjoy a sumptuous dinner. Kerbela is geographically healthily located, lying as it dose in the immediate vicinity of the vast Arabian desert; but owing to the disgustingly filthy condition of its houses, streets and suburbs, and undoubtedly to the presence of the enormous burial grounds in the immediate neighborhood of the town,

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it is continually infested with all kinds of diseases, especially cholera, which, soon after my visit there, carried off ten thousand people in less than three months, fully one-third of its whole population. A beautiful mosque of enormous proportions built over the grave of Hassan, the prophet, forms the center of the city, and is the only decent looking building in Kerbela. The bazaars, though very dark, filthy, and filled with the most fetid atmosphere imaginable, are pretty extensive, and well-stocked with all the different products of Western Asia, as well as with European goods.

About fifteen miles northeast of Kerbela, built on the left bank of the Euphrates, and surrounded by well-cultivated gardens, and clusters of shady date trees, lies the small town of Mussejjib, or Mushedjib, where all the travelers going to, or coming from Kerbela have to cross the river in the same way that we did at Hillah. This place looks considerably more decent inside, as well as outside, than Kerbela; but has nevertheless a very dilapidated appearance, and its narrow thoroughfares are very filthy. It is like Kerbela surrounded by an old mud wall, except toward the river; but the walls are in bad condition, and of no earthly use now. The town contains about twenty thousand inhabitants, mostly Arabs and Persians, and is occupied by a small Turkish garrison. Many mosques, with white cupolas and lofty minarets, are scattered over the place, greatly improving its appearance, as the houses except a few along the river, and the soldier's barracks, are miserable structures, square flat-roofed mud-huts, hardly ten feet in height, by ten to twenty feet square. We started from Mushedjib about 4 P. M., in order to reach the khan of Terweiba, about ten miles distant, before sunset. On the way we saw about half a mile to our left a troop of Bedouin horsemen coming full speed across

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FUNERAL TO KERBELA

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the plain straight toward us. My companions and myself naturally thought they were another gang of marauders going to attack us, and made ready to receive them accordingly, when Mustapha, who was quietly riding a few yards ahead of us, turned round, and seeing our warlike preparations, smilingly begged us to desist, as the party thundering so wildly toward us had no hostile intentions. He had hardly uttered the words, when they were within twenty yards of us, still at full speed, so that we began to feel considerably nervous; when lo! they stopped as suddenly as if a yawning abyss had just opened before them.

It was indeed a splendid feat of savage horsemanship; not one of the dark-featured riders overstepped the mark, and the panting horses stood all in a line, with their fore-feet as firmly planted on the ground as if they had grown there.

After the usual salutation, the oldest horseman, a tall, broad-shouldered fellow, seeming nothing but skin and bone, with sharply marked features, small, deep-set jet-black eyes of piercing power, fine aquiline nose, and snow-white moustache and beard, who evidently was the leader of the party, asked us in the calm, solemn way peculiar to the Bedouins, if we had not met or seen a fellow riding a bay mare without a saddle, going to Mushedjib. He then proceeded to give us the most minute description of the animal, adding that it was stolen while grazing in the neighborhood of their tents, about ten miles east of the khan of Tuweibah, three hours previous to our meeting with them. We told him that nobody had passed us since we had left the Euphrates. Just then one of the Bedouins spied at the extreme horizon of the immense flat before us, a single horseman riding a dark horse; but whether it was black, chestnut, or brown, he of course could not make

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out at such a distance. Everybody strained his eyes in the direction indicated by the hand of the far-sighted Bedouin, when, after a pause of perfect silence, they approached each other and held a short unintelligible conversation in an undertone, whereupon they took leave of us, and started off at the same furious speed with which they had advanced, and in the direction of the solitary horseman, who was fast disappearing beyond the western horizon. These Bedouins belonged to the Montefik tribe, were fully armed, some with lances nearly twelve feet long, others with long single-barreled Arabian guns, others with pistols, swords, and daggers, so that the situation of the horse-thief was scarcely enviable if they caught him that evening. We never knew the result of that haphazard chase. Just about sunset we reached the khan of Tuweibah, where we stopped till about ten o'clock, when the moon rose. This was the signal for us to resume our journey, and we arrived in Bagdad the next morning soon after sunrise.

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XIII.

A SHORT SEASON IN CAMP.

Preparing for a Tramp—Early Morning in Camp—Buying an Arabian Steed—Free Passage to Persian Gulf—In a Hole—Killing Hyenas—Casseba—An Adventure—Pig Hunting—In Dire Distress—A Difficult Mission—Meeting with Highwaymen—Endurance of an Arab Steed.

On my arrival in Bagdad I found a letter waiting for me from Signor P., who was still among the Bedouins, buying horses, camels, and water buffaloes. This letter was brought from Divanieh by a Bedouin horseman, and informed me that I need not expect my friend back in Bagdad for another month. This news was very welcome to me, as I was longing for a fortnight's sport along the banks of the Tigris, and heartily sick of travelling about the country, examining ruins of bygone cities, and digging for antiques, and had come to the conclusion that it was rather dull work after all. What I sighed for was excitement, and this I knew I should fully enjoy in a fortnight's encampment on the left bank of the Tigris, below Bagdad, hunting partridges, ducks, geese, flamingos, pelicans, bustards, foxes, jackals, gazelles, wild boars, hyenas, and lions, all of which are to be met with in that locality; and this sport could be agreeably diversified by an occasional day or two of fishing, both the Tigris and Euphrates abounding in large and excellent fish. My friends, whom I had invited to join in my expedition, declined the invitation, phlegmatically replying that the season was far too hot to think of sport, and that I would kill my horse within a few days by hunting in such op

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pressively sultry weather. Luckily, or rather unluckily, the cholera broke out in Bagdad the following day, and spread so rapidly that hundreds of the inhabitants died within a few days of this deadly scourge. A sudden and marvellous change now took place in my phlegmatic friends; they all came simultaneously to the conclusion that their constitutions required a change of air without delay. Strange to say, though every one of them declared he was not a bit afraid of the terrible disease, he suddenly felt sure that all he wanted was excitement, not in the filthy town, but out in the open desert, and the heat of the sun was declared not to be so oppressive after all, nor was there any more fear of overtaxing their horses. In short, three days afterward not one of the European residents, except the French missionaries, was to be found in town; but all were snugly encamped in tents, on a very pleasant spot about two miles below Ctesiphon, between the ruins of the walls of Soliman Bagh and the left bank of the Tigris, just where I wanted them to come. Even of the native inhabitants of Bagdad, all those who had the means to live for a few weeks on their income, hastily deserted their homes in the city, and pitched their tents on the river banks, outside the town, about half way between the town walls and the little village of Carara.

Our camp consisted of about thirty tents, erected in a wide circle, in the centre of which stood picketed thirty-four splendid horses, and was guarded day and night by about twenty Aghels (armed Bedouins, who make the escorting and protecting of caravans their profession), and a goodly number of excellent watch dogs and grayhounds, and last but not least, was protected by the guns of the gallant little gunboat "Satellite," which had been kindly placed at our service by the British Consul General of Bagdad, and rode snugly

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at anchor on the stately river in front of our camp. It would have been no easy matter for any marauding Bedouin gang to take possession of our property, even if the Frankees, who numbered about twenty, and were provided with a profusion of the best firearms, had happened to be far away from the camp at the time. It never did happen, however, that we were all absent at once, as there were a few ladies to attend to, who shared our camp life, and enjoyed it hugely.

Our time passed in splendid style; indeed, long before the dawn of day, the bustle in the camp commenced. Then you could see swarthy grooms busy rubbing down, saddling, and bridling horses; others might be seen engaged in coupling grayhounds; here a sportsman carefully examining his firearms and ammunition; there another engaged in the sensible occupation of stowing away a few of such provisions as were easily transportable; in the low shrubbery some two hundred yards distant from the camp, the last plaintive howl of a jackal dies away, as he retires to his lair at the approach of daybreak. Soon a small squadron of silent horsemen issues from the camp, led by a Bedouin, who carries a falcon for hunting gazelles on his right hand, which is covered with a thick leather glove, and following the coarse of the broad river, finally disappears in the dim haze of the early dawn.

Again the camp is silent for an hour or so; no sound interrupts the quiet slumber of its inmates, except the occasional cough of a horse, the loud snoring of the sleeping sais, or grooms, the sudden splash of a fish in the river, or the call of "When-ek" (where are you)? of one or the other of the Bedouin watchmen on the lookout, with which question he occasionally hails his fellow-watchmen on the opposite side of the camp, who, to prove that he is not asleep, shouts back the

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answer "Honi" (here), which short conversation is indulged in by these watchmen about every quarter of an hour, both day and night. By and by the nocturnal shadows disappear entirely, the morning star is alone visible in the firmament; but the light of even this last beacon of the night is unsteadily glimmering, and so rapidly declining that in a few minutes it will fade away altogether. Presently the herald of the morning, the proud and wakeful chanticleer perched on the firewood piled near the improvised kitchen, flaps his wings, stretches his neck, and salutes the new born day with his shrill, cheerful voice. Hadjee Habib, the head sais, jumps up, and with an energetic pull of the arm, recalls his still soundly sleeping inferiors to a consciousness of their daily duties.

Other horses are rubbed down, saddled, and bridled, some for ladies, some for gentlemen, who presently issue from their tents, and then canter in company gaily out of the camp, for their usual morning ride, up to the ruins of Ctesiphon, or out on the desert, while two or three of the Khowatchies (gentlemen) remain at home to see that everything goes on all right. The drowsy night watchmen are relieved by others, and retire to their tents to rest. Numerous camp fires soon crackle energetically for the purpose of cooking the various breakfasts, the horses are impatient, and neigh lustily for barley and water, and the dogs are loudly challenging a number of dusky human forms, who slowly amble up to the camp. These latter are Bedouin women, bringing milk, butter, cheese, eggs, fowls, sheep, etc., for sale. They are not allowed to enter the camp, as they are all more or less afflicted with kleptomania, so some of the numerous servants go out to barter with them about fifty yards from the camp, near the river's edge, where the servants from the gunboat

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also have an opportunity of joining them. Now and then a shot, either by an officer on board or by one of the parties who staid at home, is fired into a swarm of wild ducks, geese, or partridges flying overhead, settling on the river, or emerging from the shrubbery down to the water to quench their thirst, while others of the crew of the steamer are busy fishing. After an hour or two of this industrious bustle, the party that went out to enjoy an early morning ride returns to the camp, both man and beast in the best of spirits; that is, provided the former finds breakfast ready upon the table, to which more than ordinary attention is paid, even by the generally delicate looking fair sex, whose appetite has been wonderfully sharpened by the pure morning air of the desert. After breakfast, a game of whist, écarté, chess, or dominos is played till about ten, or eleven o'clock, at which time the hunting party usually returns. This welcome event is announced by a servant on the lookout for them, stationed on the ruins of the huge walls close by. These walls form the only remains of Seliman Bhagh. Finally our Nimrods make their appearance, not with the dashing canter of the party of ladies and gentlemen, who had already returned from their morning ride, but slowly and steadily, horse and rider covered with perspiration and dust, and looking altogether much the worse for wear. Even the proud falcon droops his wings and head, and the hounds, with their long tapering tails trembling between their legs, limp painfully by the side of the panting steeds, mouth wide open, and tongues swollen and protruding; in short, everything indicating that our little band had a long break-neck chase after the fleet gazelles, justly famed as the swiftest quadrupeds on earth. It appears, however, that their wonderful speed was of no avail to some of them in their precipitous flight before

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the gallant falcon, as two of their species may be seen dangling from the saddles of two of the horsemen, in company with a splendid gray fox, various hares, partridges, bustards, etc. The horses in camp lustily hail the arrival of the little cavalcade with a deafening neigh, while the young curs about the tents run to caress their canine playmates, which latter, however, tired to death by their hard work, and almost starving, are in no mood for play, and snap fiercely at the good-natured puppies whenever they come within reach. The gallant little band is cordially welcomed by everybody at home. The horses are unsaddled, and walked straight to a large sandy spot close by, where they at once lie down, and roll in the soft sand ad libitum. All Bedouins greatly advocate this latter proceeding, so much so, that many of them will obstinately refuse to buy a horse that does not roll as soon as he is unsaddled, no matter how old, or how tired, hungry, or thirsty he may be. The horses, after having rolled in the sand, are led about for about ten minutes, and then picketed, rubbed down, and fed; but are only given water twice each day, once before sunrise, and once after sunset, no matter what work they may have to go through in the meantime. After lunch, which serves for breakfast to the weary hunters, a nap is taken, till the hottest part of the day is over, when a general stampede takes place for a refreshing bath in the river, and then a short excursion is made in the boats of the steamer. After sunset a most sumptuous dinner is served "en plein air," where claret and Shiras wine, and even India pale ale and porter flow freely, followed by champagne. This important matter being settled, almost the whole population of the camp assembles on the level spot in its centre to enjoy the beautiful evening of these regions, listen to a series of European and

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Arab songs or stories, to an impromptu concert gotten up by the combined efforts of amateurs on the guitar, violin, flute and triangle, or witness a war dance of the always lively Aghels, who, attired in all the war-like paraphernalia of their tribe and profession, are proud of exhibiting their skill in the use of their voices, limbs, and instruments of war and music. By the time this is over, night has again come on; the ladies, children, married men and old bachelors then retire to their respective tents. But the young men seem in no particular hurry to woo the embraces of Morpheus. They order their narghiles, shattabs, sebils, meerschaums, cigars, cigarettes, or whatever smoking implement they most fancy (in Mesopotania everybody smokes), and quietly while away the time, puffing tobacco till the first howl of the jackal is heard, when they sally forth with their guns or rifles some distance from the river, to lie in ambush for game, which comes about this time to the river's edge to drink; and seldom do they come home empty handed. They usually return to camp between 10 P. M. and midnight. As they approach they are challenged by the watchful Aghēls, and the still more watchful dogs, and, of course, must reply, unless they wish to run the risk of being fired at, which is, to say the least, very unpleasant, and even dangerous, as these dusky watchmen are very plucky fellows, ready to fire on the slightest alarm, and, though provided with common Arab flint-lock guns only, are excellent marksmen at a short distance.

Arrived in camp the beds are carried out of the tents, and spread on the ground in the centre of the piazza, near the horses, as the young folks prefer to sleep in the open air, under the starry heavens, to being smothered in the dust and oppressive atmosphere of the tents. On retiring to rest each of them places a loaded

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gun or rifle under his pillow, less for the purpose of protection than to keep the jackals at bay; for as soon as the camp is silent these beasts of prey will prowl in small troops about the low shrubbery which surrounds the camp, attracted by the inviting scent of fat poultry, game, mutton, and fish in abundance. After awhile everybody in the camp seems to be soundly asleep, except two awkward and boisterous greyhound puppies. They, elated by the bright moonlight and the delicious night breeze, are determined to allow nobody to sleep, and therefore outrageously persist in chasing each other all round the camp, upsetting everything in their way, narghiles, bottles, chairs, buckets, running against the tables and the horse's legs, tumbling over tent poles, and tent pegs, walking off with somebody's boots or shoes, pulling at the sheets of the beds, running a hurdle race over the human forms stretched in all directions, or rolling over the beds, burying them and the sleepers in the sand as if they had only been placed there for the dog's amusement. Presently an energetic curse is heard, followed by a well-directed boot coming in rough contact with the head of one of the young curs, eliciting an unearthly whelp, and causing their abrupt and ignominious disappearance from the arena. Hardly has order been restored when from the neighboring shrubbery the half-plaintive, half-jubilant long-drawn howl of a jackal is heard, soon followed by apparently all the available vocal talent of his species in the desert, to the intense disgust of every living thing in creation except themselves. Whoever has had the misfortune to be once seranaded by these midnight prowlers can well understand the grudge everybody in camp bears them.

Soon a keen-eyed observer might notice a stir hardly perceptible, though it might be among the human forms

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stretched on the ground. The dogs receive the horrible serenade with a furious barking, but are quickly silenced by a few commanding words in an undertone. Half a dozen apparent sleepers may now be seen to turn slowly over on their faces, and lie immovable with gun or rifle in hand to receive the disturbers of night appropriately. Soon the brutes appear on the top of the mound rising about one hundred yards in the rear of the camp. This mound commands an excellent view, and here the jackals generally first post themselves in order to reconnoitre and see if everything is quiet. Ha! there is one, there another, there a third, and so on; none of them makes the least noise, but with sniffling nose, pricked ears, and knowing eye each of them makes his survey, and before five minutes have passed, the dark forms of more than forty of these worthies occupy the mound. Then a scarcely audible command is heard in camp: "Attention!" "Fire!" Bang, go half a dozen rifles like a well-fired broadside from a man-of-war, and down to the foot of the mound roll as many or more of the would-be intruders, some of them dead, others dying, others crippled and anxious to sneak away, but speedily overtaken and mercilessly dispatched by the keen-eyed Aghēls, who impale them on their lances, considering gunpowder far too valuable to be wasted on such game. The carcasses are at once dragged down to the river's edge, pitched into the Tigris and thus get a free passage to the Persian Gulf. Such is a minute description of a day's camp life during our sojourn among the ruins of Ctesiphon. I venture to add a few incidents which happened to our party during that period, for the perusal of those of my readers who may feel interested in sporting scenes and adventures.

Returning to our camp one evening from a ramble

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up the river on horseback, with two of my friends, we noticed about five miles from camp, at a place called Cassēba, on the left bank of the river, a field belonging to the poor Arabs, who are employed to watch a fuel station some distance further down the river. We found the field quite devastated by a herd of wild pigs, whose footprints were easily discernible, and were evidently made not more than twenty-four hours previous; we resolved to watch the game the next evening. So the following morning we sent two men with spades to the spot to dig three holes for our hiding place, as there was neither shrubbery nor tree within five hundred yards of the field. Shortly before sunset three of our young men repaired there, accompanied by a native with a strong donkey to carry home the spoil, in case we should be successful. There being no hiding place for the man and donkey, we were obliged to leave them at some distance behind, with orders not to stir; and to prevent the donkey's braying we tied a five or six pound stone to its tail, a remedy usually adopted by the natives of Arabia, as no donkey will bray if he cannot raise his tail. With these restrictions we left them, and walked up to the holes, which were about a hundred yards apart, and three feet deep, by about two and a half feet in diameter. As soon as the sun had disappeared in the west, each of us retired to his hole, stowing himself and his rifle away as best he could in the narrow accommodations. It was not long before my patience, and that of my two companions, was put to a severe test.

The sun had shone all day with unrelenting power into the holes we occupied, the sides of which had retained the heat, and now diffused it with such good will that we hardly dared to lean our backs against them, while the heat from the bottom almost raised

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blisters when we sat down. The atmosphere of the holes was in perfect harmony with the temperature of the sides, and drove the perspiration in profusion from all the pores of our bodies, much more effectually than the hottest atmosphere of a Turkish bath. Unluckily this was not all, for the holes were infested with myriads of sand flies, a tiny little yellowish brown fly, about one-sixth of the size of a musquito, but biting much more obstinately. Their furious attacks almost drove me to despair, forcing me to cover my neck and face with my handkerchief, hold my rifle between my knees, and stow my hands away in my pockets. Had I been allowed to smoke my pipe, I could soon have been rid of my tormentors, as they cannot stand smoke. But this indulgence was of course out of the question, as wild pigs have wonderfully keen olfactories, and would never have made their appearance on the field, which, considering the torture I was enduring, I was anxious they should do as soon as possible, so that I might be released the earlier from the little hell I occupied. Repeatedly did I stretch my neck to survey the neighborhood; but though the shadows of night had long ago settled on the river bank, everything around was wrapped in grave-like silence; a bat only fluttered by me now and then, and once or twice I heard the splashing of a fish or turtle in the river. Had I not distinctly seen the bright stars above me, I really think I should have doubted whether I was not buried alive by mistake. Two hours I sat doubled up like a monkey, with my knees drawn up to my ears, and from mere tedium began to count the stars over my head; but getting confused in the numbers, after counting them once or twice, I gave it up, and wondered if my companions were enjoying the luxury of their hiding place as much as I did, or if they had left me

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alone to ponder undisturbedly upon the nothingness of human existence.

I don't know how much longer I sat in this way; all I remember is that I felt drowsy, and was just about to indulge in an involuntary nap, when I was brought back to reality by a strange noise resembling the cough of a big dog endeavoring to clear its throat of a piece of bone. Stretching my neck to its full length, I stared in the direction from which the noise came, but could not see anything moving. In the meantime the noise had ceased; but I was sure I had not made a mistake and upon looking steadily a little longer, to my intense satisfaction, I saw a dark object standing immovable, about half way between my hiding place and that of friend W., fifty yards off the direct line between us. Though the moon was just rising, there was not sufficient light for me to make out what animal it was; but I wondered what had become of both my companions, who must have heard the noise if they were still in their hiding places, and awake. I was just about to let fly at the brute, when bang—bang, flashed two shots almost simultaneously, enabling me to see that the object shot at was not a wild boar, but either a hyena or a huge wolf. The brute dropped without a groan, as if struck by lightning; but as soon as friend W. stepped from his ambush, it jumped to its feet and made off, passing within forty yards of my retreat. I fired one shot at it, also, which laid it on the ground to rise no more. It proved to be a large male hyena, which had probably come to quench his thirst at the river. One shot had passed through the base of its neck, a second through its shoulders, and the third through the fleshy part of its hind-quarters. Though we should have preferred to bag a fat young pig instead of this nasty beast, it was clear that we should

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not get a chance at the pigs that night, as they were sure to be frightened away by our shots, so we concluded to carry the hyena to camp and try our luck at pigs another day.

While we were examining the carcass, the Arab joined us; but no sooner did the donkey espy the hyena than he pricked up his ears, shook his head, swerved suddenly round, flung the Arab unceremoniously over his head, by the side of the dead hyena, and bolted, which abrupt proceeding of course produced a shout of ringing laughter from us. It caused us considerable trouble to recapture the fugitive, and lead him back to where he was wanted; but he resolutely declined carrying our spoil back to camp, snorting ferociously, shaking his head, rearing and kicking in all directions, whenever we tried to put the animal on his back; aware of the uselessness of our attempts to break him into this kind of work, we gave it up, and proceeded to skin the hyena, which was quickly accomplished, whereupon we left the carcass, but took the skin away with us. The Arab thought the donkey would not object to carrying the skin, so he mounted; friend J. tossed him the skin, while I covered the donkey's eyes with my handkerchief; all went on pleasantly, the Arab on the donkey's back, with the hyena's skin over his shoulders, led the way home, while we followed on foot, indulging in a smoke. The Arab told us that as soon as the shots were fired a large herd of wild pigs rushed by his hiding place in the bush, led by a boar much larger than his donkey, and if we had not fired on the disgusting hyena, we would no doubt shortly afterward have had a chance at the pigs, which he, though a Moslem, did not mind touching if he was paid for it, but would not eat for any money. He had hardly finished his speech, when the donkey,

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which had walked at a wonderfully brisk pace all the way back, accidentally caught sight of the obnoxious skin again, and suddenly diving his head between his fore-legs, lashed out furiously and bolted with the hapless Arab; in spite of the latter's desperate attempts to keep him in the path, straight across the country he rushed, and finally threw his rider into the thorn bushes. Once more his own master, the donkey did not await our arrival, but struck out for the camp, about two miles distant, and did not slacken his pace till he arrived there; while we picked up our Arab, fortunately coming across the hyena's skin, which had been lost in the involuntary steeple chase. An hour afterward we found our long-eared fugitive quietly standing near the horses in camp.

A few nights after, we went again to Casseba to secure a wild pig, for the purpose of changing our diet a little; for though I have never been very fond of pork in any form, I do not hesitate to eat the meat of the wild boar or pig, which is far preferable to that of the domesticated animal, for the following good sanitary reasons: The wild pig is far more dainty in its food than the latter, it being in fact a strict vegetarian, and not as fond of rolling in mud and filth; on the contrary it is very fond of pure water, to which it takes naturally and is withal a splendid swimmer; all its life it has breathed the pure fresh air of the wilderness, and, owing to its restless roving propensity, it is never unnaturally fat. For these reasons it is evident that its health, and, consequently, its flesh must be superior to that of the domesticated pig, as has been amply attested by medical examinations. But to return to our adventure, we found the holes which we had occupied on the former occasion undisturbed and took possession of them immediately after sunset. This time we had not

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to wait long for the game, for hardly had we ensconced ourselves in our hiding places, than a loud rustling of the dry leaves covering the surface of the field, and an occasional abrupt grunt informed us of the approach of the bristly customers. I could not refrain from raising myself to get a glance at them. There they stood in the middle of the field, about sixty yards distant from our retreats. It was a nice family of ten porkers, eight of them only medium size, apparently about a year old, under the guardianship of two enormously big ones, evidently their parents. The latter kept a good look-out and lowered their ponderous heads only occasionally, while the younger ones were busily digging away, burying their muzzles up to their ears in the dry leaves and stalks. The huge old fellow especially attracted my attention, I might almost say my admiration, for there he stood in the fast fading twilight, his powerful frame profusely covered with a coat of long coarse bristles, which stood almost erect on his broad back; his square and ponderous head was nearly as heavy as the rest of his body; his lower jaw armed with enormous tusks, bent boldly back in the form of the blade of a sickle, or a crescent, and certainly measuring fully eight inches in length, while the whole weight of the animal could not have been less than four hundred pounds. The dark powerful frame of this ferocious looking creature stood forth in bold relief from the faintly rosy tinted sky, which constituted the beautiful background to this "Evening Landscape on the Borders of the Loorian Desert," illuminated as it was by the last hues of the parting twilight, and I could not help confessing that this fierce boar suspiciously snuffing the air, and stamping on the ground with his fore-feet, presented the very embodiment of savage independence and defiance. This circumstance alone induced me to

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covet his head, for I knew that owing to his great age and size his flesh would naturally taste very strong and far less palatable than that of his smaller companions Presently I saw them advancing leisurely toward my hiding place, the old fellow leading. They were not more than forty yards from my retreat, and I was just about leveling my rifle at them, when two large clods of earth detached from the brink of the hole and fell at my feet. Slight as was the noise produced by this fall, it was sufficient to rouse the suspicions of the cautious leader of the troop, which instantly raised his ugly head, and in doing so spied part of my rifle, or of my head, and, before I had time to cover him properly with my double barrel, he gave a loud sharp grunt and bolted, crashing through the beans. Bang—bang—went both of my shots in quick succession, and, though disappointed in my attempts at the old fellow, I had the satisfaction of seeing one of his offspring roll over, kicking on the ground. The others made off straight for the brushwood about five hundred yards distant, followed by four more bullets from my friends, who succeeded in seriously crippling the old sow, bowling her over; but before we could overtake her she was on her legs again and succeeded in getting under cover. We had the pleasure, however, of seeing our Arab, whom we had left at the very spot where the pigs disappeared, give us a gratis exhibition of his pedestrian abilities. Though armed with a Bedouin flintlock gun and a long curved dagger, when he saw the fugitives charge straight towards him, he thought discretion was the better part of valor and took to his heels with the speed of a greyhound, shamefully abandoning his donkey to its own resources. Noticing the stampede of its lord and master, it took the hint and rushed after him, kicking up its heels and

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braying furiously. Never did I witness a more ludicrous sight.

Retracing our steps to where our victim lay, we found it to be a nice fat pig yearling, weighing about a hundred pounds, and just the thing for a dinner party. Soon after we heard the distant voice of our Arab, urging his old donkey into a slow trot by a series of unearthly yells, blows with the butt end of his gun, and well-directed kicks. Coming up he assured us that the old boar had discovered him, and would have ripped him open if he had not got out of the way; infuriated as the boar was by a wound in the shoulder, from which the Arab declared he saw the blood flowing as the animal came crashing along. We had no difficulty this time in loading our donkey with the game, as we had taken the precaution of wrapping a large woolen blanket, we had brought for that purpose, round the pig. On our way home we knocked over two jackals that, in company with several others, were admiring the rising moon from the top of a mound, a little above Ctesiphon, and startled a small herd of gazelles, which had lain down some two hundred yards to the left of our track; but owing to their proverbial agility, they were off almost before we caught sight of them, so that we failed to bag them, though we fired three shots after them. Three days subsequently, we bagged two of them, however, by means of trained hunting falcons and greyhounds, the favorite way of hunting gazelles among the Arabs, and minutely described in a former part of this book.

One morning before sunrise I went out partridge shooting with four of my friends, among whom were two English missionaries, Messrs. B. and E., who had lived, with their families more than ten years in Bagdad. A few miles from camp we separated, the

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missionaries with another of the party scouring the low shrubbery round a little creek formed by a swamp connected with the river, while my friend T. and myself followed the course of the river. We had bagged a good many brace of partridges and ducks, and in consequence of the heat of the sun, which toward noon always became very oppressive, had resolved to return home. We also felt hungry, and were a long way from camp. Just as we were about to retrace our steps, friend J. called my attention to a small sand-bank, about a mile lower down the river, which was literally covered with ducks, geese, pelicans, and flamingos. Among the latter were some particularly desirable ones, owing to their bright rosy and crimson plumage, which induced us to advance another mile in spite of the earnest protest of our empty stomachs. When we came within two hundred yards of the island of birds, I noticed, while creeping through the tall reeds on the bank to keep out of sight of the birds, a large animal, looking very much like a huge Bedouin dog, crouching down on a low grass-covered mound on the opposite shore, and gazing apparently on the feathered community stationed on the little island. This opposite spectator was of a light brown color with a yellowish white chest, round head, and peculiar cat-like look; not being aware of the presence of any Bedouin camp in that locality, I doubted its being a dog; but the idea that it was a lion was almost absurd, as according to the natives they had of late become very scarce in that neighborhood, and if there had been a solitary lion prowling about, it would doubtless have been scared off long before by the regular thunder of the steamer's gun, which was fired every evening at sunset, and must have been audible in that locality; for, though by our route it was a long distance from

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camp, owing to our following the course of the extremely tortuous river, yet it was in reality only about two miles distant in a direct line. Being at a loss by what name to call the animal, I thought it best to tell my friend that a dog was in charge of the sand-bank. Upon his asking "where?" I pointed out the direction, when he at once declared that our vis-à-vis was a lion. Finding that we were both of the same opinion, I motioned for him to stoop down and talk the matter over with me. If we had but brought our rifles instead of harmless shot-guns, it would have been all right, and we could have settled him with perfect ease and safety to ourselves; but provided as we were with only small slugs and bird shot, we had to take our chances in the finest opportunity a man could wish for. With such ammunition it would be impossible to do him any harm, though at this place the river was only about eighty yards broad. We ransacked our pockets and belts for heavier ammunition. As luck would have it, we found one ball, only one, and this was a conical rifle ball, and therefore much too small for a smooth bore gun. This did not discourage us, however, as we hoped to make up the deficiency by wrapping a shred of my handkerchief round the bullet; the remaining gun barrels we loaded carefully with slugs; glancing from time to time through the reeds to watch the lion, who appeared to be in blissful ignorance of our presence and murderous intent. It was agreed that I should first fire the bullet, and then as soon as he should spring to his feet, we would sprinkle him with three charges of slugs. I took a good, steady aim, and fired; but lo! the wretched ball lodged in the mound about a foot below the brute. With lightning like rapidity the stately animal rose to his feet; with head erect and waving tail, he looked proudly

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around as if at a loss to know what this meant; but he had not long to wait for an explanation, for bang—bang—bang—we peppered him with slugs, which raised a cloud of dust round him, and made him perform a prodigious leap, and disappear forever from our eyes in the tall reeds on the river bank, leaving nothing but the remembrance of him behind. Fearfully disappointed, we picked up our traps and made toward the camp, unmindful of the loud shriek of hundreds of flamingos, geese, and other water fowl, which had been startled by our guns, and were now gyrating high above our heads.

My friends J. and W. having with myself, several times during our sojourn near Ctesiphon, returned to camp with wild pigs which we had shot, a young Englishman, Capt. C., once made the foolish remark, at a dinner in our camp, that it was neither sportsmanlike nor gentlemanlike to hunt pigs with powder and ball, but that it should invariably be done on horseback with the lance. I told him that I had the pleasure of being personally acquainted with Major Probin, the famous one-armed tiger-slayer, of Western India; Capts. Davidson and Baumgardtner, of India sporting fame, and Messrs. Green and Anderson, of South African elephant shooting propensities, as well as with many others, all of them acknowledged gentlemen and first-class sportsmen, and that none of them considered it beneath his dignity, or injurious to his sporting fame, to bowl over a wild boar with a ball from their unerring rifles. Only partially satisfied with my explanation, Capt. C. made arrangements for a pig-sticking expedition to take place the following week. On the day fixed for the sport seven or eight horsemen left the camp long before sunrise, splendidly mounted, and armed with long spears or lances. Not far from camp they came up to a small

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herd of pigs, which, however, took refuge on their approach in the dense and thorny brushwood close by. Owing to the small number of Arab beaters (men on foot employed to scare and drive the game before them by yelling and beating of the bushes with heavy sticks they had with them), our sportsmen had to perform most of this unpleasant work themselves by forcing their horses through the densest thickets. By dint of almost superhuman labor the party succeeded in driving the pigs out on the open plain; but at what a price! The legs of the poor fellows, as well as those of their gallant horses, were horribly lacerated by the bushes, prickly pears, and other thorny plants, and blood marked their track as they advanced. As soon as the game was driven out, a hot chase commenced, poor piggy taking to his legs with a will, endeavoring to reach another cover some few hundred yards distant, closely pursued by the well-mounted hunters, who thrust at them right and left with their sharp spears whenever they succeeded in coming up to them, which, by the way, was no easy work, for though the fleet Arab horses can easily overtake any wild pig in a straight-forward race, the latter when pursued, will never take a direct course, but will dodge and evade his pursuer by swerving abruptly round to either right or left, by running in zigzag line, by stopping suddenly, turning round, and running back in the direction whence he came.

Pig sticking on the borders of the Loorian desert is particularly hard and dangerous work, for the pigs of this region appear not only to be much fleeter than those of any other country, but the country itself is particularly unfavorable and dangerous for both horse and rider by reason of its clayey ground, baked as hard as a stone by the scorching heat of summer, and split in all directions by deep fissures, varying from

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one inch to two feet in width, and from one to six feet in depth, so that any horse going at full speed, and happening to fall with his feet in one of these larger fissures, must inevitably break his legs, and at the same time afford his rider a splendid opportunity to break his neck, amusements which may be considered as rather too expensive to be indulged in for the sake of a paltry wild pig. After a hot chase of about a thousand yards, Mr. E. and Mr. J., two excellent horsemen, each succeeded in securing his pig, while Capt. C. (the one who had objected to shooting pigs) was still dashing after the wily porker he had singled out for his prey. Heedless of the dangerous ground over which he sped with lightning-like rapidity, his eyes intently fixed on the bristly fugitive scarcely five yards ahead of him, he was just about plunging the point of his glittering spear into the panting side of the exhausted boar, when—crash! down came horse and rider with a terrible shock. When the rest of the party arrived at the spot a horrid sight presented itself; with both his fore-legs wedged in one of the fissures lay the poor horse, completely stunned by the terrific fall, with head, chest and knees frightfully lacerated and bleeding; about twenty feet ahead of the horse lay the hapless rider, with his face downward just as he fell, and to all appearances a corpse. On picking him up his face was found to be one horrid mass of blood flowing from nose, mouth and ears, while his eyes were shut and the orbs turned upwards. A field flask of brandy, the only stimulant at hand, was applied at once, but without avail, for he gave no signs of life. As there were no appropriate means to transport the man back to camp in his critical condition, one of the horsemen was sent back to the tents to obtain a litter and mattress, and to

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AN ADVENTURE—PIG-STICKING IN ARABIA.

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procure the immediate attendance of the surgeon of the gunboat. While some of the party attended to the prostrate man, the rest proceeded to extricate the horse. Finding both of his fore-legs broken, it was of course immediately despatched by a dagger in the hands of one of the Arab beaters. Assistance from the camp soon arrived. Upon careful examination the Dr. pronounced the prostrate man still alive, but in a very critical condition, having sustained a concussion of the brain, broken his left arm, right wrist, and collar bone, and but for his excellent constitution the sufferer would have likely succumbed to his injuries. He was still senseless when brought into the camp, but soon after recovered sufficiently to be able to open his eyes. It took the patient fully three months to recover entirely from the effects of his accident, and he never again conversed with me upon the respective merits of pig-sticking and pig-shooting.

An accident of a considerably less serious nature than the preceding, and that caused us to be for some time the butt of bad jokes, happened to a friend of mine and myself a few days afterward. We had repeatedly noticed while out fishing and bathing that a large covey of fat wild geese used to settle toward sunset on the uttermost end of a low, sandy promontory in the river, for the purpose of passing the night there, which induced us one evening to watch and try a shot at them from behind a tuft of low shrubbery growing on a slight elevation of the sandy river bank. Soon after sunset the geese settled in their usual haunt; we fired simultaneously into them, killing two of the birds outright, and wounding two other of the birds so severely that they remained struggling and fluttering on the spot; being anxious to secure them, and observing that they were trying to reach the water, in which

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case we would perhaps have lost them, we left the guns on the river bank, so that they should not be wet, and ran at full speed toward the unfortunate birds. But when within six yards of one of our victims, unexpectedly and much to my dismay, I sank up to my waist in the soft mud that I had mistaken for *terra firma;* there I was, solidly wedged in the mud, like a cork in the neck of a bottle; with a feeling of deep disgust I turned to look at my friend, who was taller and heavier than myself, when, oh, horror! I saw him about three yards behind me in the same predicament as myself, and laughing immoderately. Though there was some consolation in being able to see a friend's cheerful face so close to me, it was not quite what I wished, for though only a few yards apart, we could render no more assistance to each other than if we had been thirty miles distant, so that if we had been musically inclined, our respective positions would have perfectly justified us in singing with the poet, "Thou art so near, and yet so far."

The prospect of being buried alive, standing upright in a mud-bank, with nothing near us but two dead and two lame geese, and that too in a locality where a week might elapse and not a human being pass by, was not very cheerful. To be sure, there was no danger of our being snuffed at by curious jackals, nor being gnawed at by hungry hyenas, as these creatures would be too cautious to venture on such treacherous territory; and even if they were audacious enough to insist upon making our closer acquaintance, they would have to pay for it by getting in the same trouble as ourselves; but the idea of spending even one night in such a tight-fitting and damp bed induced us to make the most strenuous efforts to release ourselves. We soon gave it up, however, finding it only caused us

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to sink deeper and deeper, till we were up to our armpits in the soft mud. Very cheerful, indeed! with the additional lively prospect of disappearing altogether from the surface during the night, leaving nothing above the earth but our hats to serve as tomb-stones. The last shade of twilight had disappeared, and a solitary star glimmered here and there on the darkening horizon, the gloomy silence of nature was only interrupted by the distant howl of the prowling jackal, or the splashing of a fish in the smooth, silvery waters of the Tigris, and we had given up all hopes of rescue, when the distant screeching yell of a ragged old Arab, urging on his lazy donkey laden with two bundles of brushwood, echoed along the banks of the river like strains of heavenly music in our ears. "Dal, Dal. Come, come!" we roared at the imminent risk of bursting our lungs, and this cry we kept up incessantly till we had the unspeakable happiness of finding that we had attracted his attention. Fully aware of the fine opportunity for earning a liberal reward, the old fellow at once stopped his donkey, and proceeded quietly to unload the animal so as to avail himself of the ropes and leather thongs for the purpose of effecting our rescue. Tying these together, he made a line long enough for one end, thrown with force, to reach my friend, who grasped it eagerly. But it required a considerably stronger line to drag him out of the mud, for that one snapped asunder every time the Arab put it to the test, unceremoniously seating the latter on the muddy ground, while my poor friend involuntarily slipped back into his former position, cheered by a loud laugh from his fellow-prisoner, who, notwithstanding the similar predicament he was in, could not help feeling amused at the futile attempts he was witnessing. Finding that it was useless to make any

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further attempts with such insufficient means, we told the Arab to run back to camp and procure a stronger line from Hadjee Habib, our chief sais or groom, with strict injunctions not to tell anybody what had happened to us; but in case of urgency, he might say we needed the rope to bring home our game. The Arab was instantly on his donkey and off for the camp. Owing to the fast increasing darkness, he did not see our guns, which were resting against a small bush, though he passed within three yards of them; and it was lucky for us that it happened so, for the old fellow, who was a perfect stranger to us, would no doubt have preferred the possession of two splendid double-barreled guns to the expected baksheesh (reward), and would most certainly have disappeared forever with them, leaving their lawful owners to their fate. In due time the Arab arrived in camp, and applied to the proper party for the desired rope; but Hadjee Habib doubted the honesty of the applicant, and flatly refused to give him the rope, declared himself willing however to accompany him to the scene of reported distress. The Arab was anxious to earn the whole baksheesh himself, but seeing there was no alternative, he consented reluctantly, and was instantly escorted by Hadjee Habib on horseback well armed, and carrying a long, stout rope. The faithful sais almost fainted when he heard the voices of his two masters, sticking up to their shoulders in the mud; but he lost no time in throwing the line to my friend, and with the energetic assistance of his fellow-countrymen succeeded in landing him on *terra firma*. Then the trio set to work with right good will to liberate my precious self, which was also accomplished without much difficulty. We at once secured our guns and ammunition, and gave them into the charge of Hadjee Habib, while we jumped into the

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river with our clothes on to get rid of the thick layer of sticky clay with which we were of course covered from head to foot. Half an hour after we arrived safely in camp, sneaked quietly into our tents to change our clothes, paid our Arab deliverer, and mixed with the other inhabitants of the camp as if nothing had happened. But though Hadjee Habib swore by his beard (the usual way for Moslems to take an oath) he would reveal nothing, in some way the matter became known after all, and for several weeks we were victimized by bad jokes and sarcasms.

During one of those magnificent moonlight nights for which Arabia and Mesopotamia justly are a world-wide fame, I went to the river's edge to try a shot at the gazelles by moonlight, accompanied by the same friend who had shared the muddy bed with me. We had selected a narrow inlet of the river where these beautiful creatures come at midnight to drink, not far from camp. As it was a locality destitute of vegetable matter of any kind, we had been obliged to dig two deep holes during the day, into which we retired shortly before midnight, anxiously waiting the arrival of the game. The moonlight was so bright that we could easily have read a book if it had not been for the troublesome musquitoes which swarmed in myriads, requiring all our attention to keep them at bay; the night was remarkably quiet, as is usual after an oppressively hot day, and it seemed as if every living thing, except ourselves and our diminutive tormentors' was asleep, or in a kind of languid stupor from the effect of the still sulty atmosphere. This calm naturally made us feel very drowsy, and both of us would likely have fallen into a doze, had not at that moment a gang of about ten jackals appeared in view, slowly advancing down the bank of the river toward the

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water. While doing so they kept a good lookout, snuffing the air with upturned noses as if they had some suspicion that all was not quite right. These suspicions, however, seemed to disappear as they came down to the water between our two hiding places, which were not more than forty feet from each other. One of the prowlers walked unsuspectingly up to the brink of my pit, so close indeed that I might have caught hold of one of his paws, had I not been afraid of his sharp teeth. What must have been his astonishment at finding that he was looking directly down upon a man with a rifle. Just as he noticed me I coughed slightly so as to scare them away, not wishing to spoil our chance at the gazelles by firing at jackals. With a suppressed shriek the dreadfully frightened jackal swerved around, which was the signal for a general and ridiculously abrupt stampede.

Once more all nature was wrapped in deep silence; the only creatures visible were a few bats fluttering noiselessly over our heads, and the only sound that struck the ear was the shrill "Kee-wee" of the desert plover, a bird about the size and color of a magpie, with long red legs, and bill of the same color; this cry may be heard at short intervals by day or night in all the solitary spots of Northern Arabia, Mesopotamia and Syria. Just about midnight I was roused from my drowsiness by a faint splash in the water, which I at first ascribed to the leap of a fish, or to some startled water-fowl; but as I heard the same noise immediately after, I slightly raised my head, when to my joyous surprise I saw right before me on the outside of the little creek eight or ten fine gazelles, standing in about one foot depth of water, some drinking, others contemplating their graceful forms in the silvery mirror, others still were raising their heads and reconnoitering. I

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silently adjusted my rifle, and was about to take aim at the foremost one in the water, when a sudden flash and simultaneous report cut things short. With the speed of lightning the game dashed off, hardly giving me time to fire a random shot into the midst of the fugitives, with apparently no further effect than scattering them, and hastening their disappearance in the open desert. The next I saw was a fine buck lying on his side and kicking in the agonies of death, half of his body in the water and half on the land; my friend had knocked him over by a shot through the chest. He bore his trophy on his shoulders to the camp where we passed the remainder of the night. On the approach of morning, we went out partridge shooting, and were quite successful. To enjoy a better view of the majestic sunrise, we climbed one of the many mounds which compose the ruins of Seliman Bhagh. We had scarcely arrived on the top, when we noticed three or four jackals congregated on the open plain, about half a mile from where we stood, apparently fighting over something that lay on the ground. Thinking it strange that jackals should so far forget themselves as to allow the sun to witness their quarrels, we resolved to investigate the matter and send them home. Aware of our approach they very reluctlantly skulked off, till we fired two shots after them, when they took to their heels with a hearty good will. Coming up to the object they had been fighting over, we found it to be a gazelle with a bullet hole through the neck; the body being still fresh, and evidently only a few hours dead, we had not the slightest doubt that this was one of the gazelles we had been watching the preceding night, accidentally wounded in its rapid flight by my random shot, producing hemorrhage, and subsequently death, either from exhaustion, or by the jackals. The body,

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however, was so dreadfully mangled by the dastardly brutes that it was quite worthless; the head alone was not disfigured, and was armed with a beautiful pair of horns, so that we cut it off and took it to the camp.

During our sojourn at Ctesiphon, the two Arabs employed to proceed with two donkeys to Bagdad, alternately every day of the week, to buy groceries, vegetables, and other necessaries for our camp, returned several times a few hours after their departure, without either money or provisions, urging the plea that they had been attacked and robbed of the money with which they had been entrusted, by a gang of five marauding Bedouins on horseback, who as they asserted were continually prowling about Casseba, a place situated about half way between our camping ground and the mouth of the Diyāla, which river joins the Tigris just half way between the ruins of Ctesiphon and the city of Bagdad. It was in this locality we shot the hyena previously mentioned. Densely covered with bushes, especially along the road, or rather footpath; and as there are no human habitations within eight miles, that district affords a capital hiding place for highwaymen. Our Arabs were never attacked when on their way back to the camp, but invariably on their way to town, *i. e.*, when they had the ready money in their possession, and the robbers relieved them of the money only, as both donkeys were branded on their haunches, and would moreover have only been an impediment to the robbers in case of pursuit; the donkeys were also old and almost valueless, though they constituted all the worldy riches of the two poor devils, whose scanty and tattered clothing was not likely to excite the cupidity of the gang. As both fellows were notorious in camp for telling lies, and the proverb "there is but little difference between a liar and a thief" is common in Mesopotamia, our

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suspicions were aroused that these two rascals either pocketed the money themselves, or that they were in league with the marauders, allowing themselves to be robbed for the purpose of getting their share of the booty afterwards. In less than a month over one thousand Turkish piasters (about $45 American money) of our money disappeared in this way; but the loss of the money was not as aggravating as our being obliged to dispense with groceries and vegetables often for days, to the great discomfort of the ladies and children in camp, who greatly preferred vegetable to animal diet (a characteristic of European life in Arabia and Mesopotamia). It was therefore resolved that every day three of our young men well mounted and armed should escort the two Arabs as far as the Diyāla, beyond which river there was no danger of an attack; strange to say the escort never saw or met with any suspicious characters on the road, but the very first time the three young men staid at home, the Arabs returned with long faces, and minus our money, of course. This so exasperated everybody in camp that we vowed vengeance, and resolved to spot the dastardly vagabonds. As if sent by Providence to exculpate his two fellow-countrymen on whom our grave suspicions rested, an unknown Arab made his appearance in camp about sunset, nearly naked, and apparently greatly frightened and exhausted. After having seized and kissed the hands (the customary way of introducing oneself, as well as claiming protection among the Arabs) of the first party he met outside the camp, who happened to be Mr. R., a young man speaking and writing Arabic as well as a native Arab; the stranger told him that he came from Bagdad, and was returning to Azizēa, a little town on the Tigris, about thirty-six miles below Seliman Bhagh; but that he had been

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attacked in the bushes of Cassēba by five ruffians who had relieved him of a young brown mare saddled and bridled, a woolen blanket, a sword, two pistols, a small amount of money and all his wearing apparel, except a pair of old trousers. He begged to be allowed to spend the night in camp, as he was hungry, thirsty, and exhausted. He looked like a fellow who told the truth, so his request was granted with the proviso that he was not to leave till daylight the next morning, which he promised faithfully. Upon this he was properly cared for by his countrymen in camp, and after refreshing himself a little, he proceeded to describe the five highwaymen who had robbed him. His description of these worthies corresponded minutely with that given by our two donkey drivers. Though there was every appearance of truth in the story, there were men in camp who were too well acquainted with the character of Arabs in general, and Bedouin tricks in particular to put much confidence in it. They suspected that the poor devil was an accomplice of the marauders sent into camp as a spy, or for the purpose of robbery. It was thought advisable not to show any suspicions and to treat him ostensibly as the victim of robbers; but in realty all his movements were to be closely watched by the shrewd Aghēls, in whose tent he was to sleep during the night, and who had been made responsible for his safe keeping, with strict orders to shoot him if he attempted to leave the camp before sunrise. Previous to our retiring to rest it was agreed that he should be provided with a donkey in the morning, and that he should proceed with one of our two donkey drivers quietly toward Bagdad, for which journey we would pay him two hundred Turkish piasters (about $10 in American currency) in case of his being attacked

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again in the neighborhood of Cassēba, to which he agreed.

After this arrangement was concluded, everybody in the camp retired to rest except the Aghēls, who kept an unusually vigilant lookout that night; but the stranger slept soundly, and had to be awakened next morning. Soon after sunrise, the two men mounted their donkeys and went towards Bagdad, with a small amount of money to buy provisions. Scarcely were they out of sight, when an air of bustle pervaded the camp. Horses were hastily saddled and bridled, rifles and revolvers were examined and loaded, and, ten minutes later, eight horsemen rode slowly and silently out of the camp toward Cassēba, not on the Arabs' track, but by a great circuit, and hidden from view by a long range of high mountains which constitute the ruins of Seliman Bhagh and Ctesiphon; thus successfully evading detection on the part of our two Arabs. On account of the wide circuit, we had to fall into a brisk pace, so that we might reach Cassēba before the two men. About two miles above Ctesiphon, at a spot where the regular path to Bagdad forms a kind of defile through a cutting in one of the enormous mud-walls or mounds, we saw the two men disappear behind the mound, quite unconscious that they were so closely watched. As soon as they had disappeared in the bushes the other side of the mound, we separated; four men following the course of the river, the banks of which are here overgrown with tall reeds and brush-wood for several miles; while the other four followed the range of mounds to its uttermost end, keeping themselves closely concealed behind the mounds till they should hear the report of firearms, when they would dash out on the open plain and try to take the marauders prisoners, or else shoot them. Friend J. and

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myself joined the latter party, who reached the end of the range about twenty minutes after we had separated from our companions. Immediately after our arrival, we dismounted and climbed the mound for the purpose of reconnoitering. A large tuft of dry grass afforded a capital screen for our faces. The whole bushy plain lay like an immense chart before us; everything was distinctly visible from our exalted position. Moreover, we had the advantage of having the sun behind us. At first we could see no human beings except our two Arabs, trudging on one behind the other, on account of the narrowness of the path, which wound serpent-like through the bushes. They were only about six hundred yards to the left of us, riding rather slowly, as if they neither knew of nor cared for the dangerous character of the locality. Presently we saw them battering their donkeys' sides with the heels of their bare feet, and even heard them yelling in the usual way of the Arabs when urging a donkey to greater speed, which indiscretion rather surprised us, the more so that both of them must have been fully aware that it was quite against the rules of caution to make much noise in that neighborhood. This sound of the human voice brought round a slight change in the tableau before our eyes; for soon, to our great excitement, we noticed a slight commotion in the dense bushes scarcely three hundred yards ahead of the two travelers, and about a hundred yards to the left of their path. We distinctly saw the swarthy figure of an Arab mount a bay horse, and, rising in the stirrups, stretch his neck and scan all the country round. After remaining half a minute in this position, he nimbly dismounted, and hurriedly leading his horse by the bridle, disappeared in the thicket a hundred yards further on. About the same time we had the unspeakable pleasure of spying the smooth, womanlike face of our

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tall friend, W., and the red tarboosh or fez of friend R. peeping cautiously over a dense bush not more than two hundred yards from the spot where the suspected individual disappeared. They seemed to be unaware of the whereabouts of our two Arabs, and quite unconscious of the presence of others. Nearer and nearer to the dangerous spot advanced the two travelers. Gladly would we have stopped to see the rascals pounce upon the two poor fellows; but we had lingered too long on the mound, and expected every minute to see the dance begin. We therefore hurried down, vaulted into the saddle, got ready for the charge and waited impatiently for the signal.

Ten minutes, at least, elapsed before the tremendous report of two Arab pistols was heard. Like lightning we dashed round the corner, and headed straight towards a cluster of date trees of enormous height growing near the mouth of the river Diyāla and visible at a distance of over twenty miles. But scarcely had we made our appearance on the open plain, when five villainous looking Bedouins, profusely armed, and well mounted, but in tattered garments, crashed at a break-neck pace through the bushes to our left, some three hundred yards ahead of us, hotly pursued by our four companions, who tried hard to make them prisoners, and did not fire a single shot at first. The savage scoundrels uttered a yell of rage as they spied us four dashing upon them in an opposite direction, and shook their long lances in defiance, as they reached the open ground before we had time to cut them off. Though they were at least three hundred yards ahead of us, we did not give up the hope of catching some of them, and kept up the pursuit at a break-neck pace for some time; but they were too well mounted, and too well acquainted with the territory over which they sped to allow us

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to overtake them so easily. Noticing, however, to their consternation, that we succeeded in shortening the distance between us considerably, they were just about trying their usual dodge of separating, and riding in different directions, when we gave them a volley from our revolvers, which only had the effect of increasing the speed of their horses, while the bold riders, naturally expecting another volley, stooped down over the right side (off-side) of their steeds, thus effectually getting out of our sight, leaving only the right leg visible in the saddle, almost as if the five horses sped away without any riders at all. Never before did I witness such dashing horsemanship; but scarcely had two minutes elapsed, when we were gratuitously treated to a second feat, which far exceeded the former, and filled us all with wonder. As they had anticipated we gave them another volley, but this time with our rifles and guns, as we thought them beyond pistol range. This volley was more effective than the first, for it brought down the horse of the foremost rider with a tremendous crash, the poor animal rolling over and over, while its rider, who had probably thought himself out of range, and had resumed his usual seat in the saddle, was thrown at least ten yards ahead of his horse flat upon his face. Whether he was killed outright by the terrible fall, or only stunned, remains a mystery that can only be solved by himself, if he recovered, or by his savage companions; for no sooner did he touch the ground than two of the latter, without slackening even for an instant the appalling speed of their horses, came up, one on each side of their prostrate friend, suddenly bent from their saddles, and with a simultaneous Herculean grasp raised the body entirely from the ground, deposited him safely on the lap of one of them, dashing along all the time this was being done, as fast as their horses could run

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ENCOUNTERING HOSTILE BEDOUINS.

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The novelty and daring of the performance elicited an involuntary exclamation of astonishment, I might almost have said of admiration, from us; I must not omit to add that the instant the horse and rider fell, the rest of the marauders turned in their saddles, and fired into us, less for the sake of returning the compliment, I believe, than for the purpose of keeping us a little at bay, so as to facilitate the rescue of their unfortunate friend; but they had aimed too high, and their bullets whizzed harmlessly over our heads. When we came up to the horse, which still lay apparently lifeless on the ground, we gave up the chase. On examination we found that the animal was only stunned by the fall. The latter had evidently been caused by a conical rifle ball, which had struck the shoulder blade in an oblique direction, and therefore glanced off, producing an ugly, but not dangerous wound. The poor brute was a middle-aged, but beautiful dark brown mare of the purest Anezee breed; satisfied that she would be all right again in a few weeks, if properly cared for, we dressed her wounds, of which she had several produced by her severe fall, beside the shot wound. She soon revived, and was gently brought to camp, where Hadjee Habib, our chief groom, who had the reputation of being a skilful veterinary surgeon, took her under his care, and succeeded in restoring her to perfect condition in a few weeks. She was afterwards sold at auction in our camp, and knocked down to friend J., who kept her till he took a fancy to a larger animal. I hear she was sold lately for an enormous price; the captured saddle and lance of her previous proprietor was awarded to her medical attendant, while the Arab who had been robbed by the marauders, and had taken refuge in our camp, received one-half of the proceeds of the sale at auction of the captured mare,

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with which amount he proceeded at once to Bagdad to buy another horse and equipment for his journey to Azizia. In order that our meeting with the highwaymen should be fully understood, it is necessary to explain that the four horsemen, who constituted the other half of our party, followed at a quick pace the bank of the river, up to the spot where we espied two of them from the top of the mound. There they halted to learn the whereabouts of our two Arabs, who, when they came up to the place where the highwaymen lay concealed, were pounced upon by the latter, who fired two pistol shots over them to terrify the poor devils, a dodge usually practiced by Bedouin marauders. This report naturally attracted the attention of our four horsemen near the river, who made straight for the locality whence the sound proceeded; unfortunately, their horses, which were all stallions, became aware of the presence of mares and began to neigh lustily, to the intense disappointment of their masters; for no sooner did the noise reach the ears of the Bedouins, than they began to suspect something, and abandoning all hope of plunder, decamped through thick and thin, as already described. Had this uncalled for neighing not taken place, we should probably have caught part if not all the robbers alive; this very circumstance is one of the principal reasons why nearly all Arabs, and especially marauding Bedouins, give such a preference to mares, as they seldom or never neigh, while most Arab stallions will neigh at the sight of any horse even when still far off, and all will inevitably neigh if they see a mare. Arab horses have the remarkable instinct of making them out at almost incredible distances. The old sheik, Forchan, chief of a section of the tribe of Shamnir Bedouins, once offered to bet me any number of sheep that he would tell me the sex of any horse, two miles

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off, simply by the behavior of his stallion, a beautiful, thoroughbred chestnut, provided, of course, that he and his horse should be placed in a locality from which they could see the object in dispute at a distance; I accepted the bet three times and lost each time.

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XIV.

NEAR CARARA.

Visiting an old Friend—A Sirocco in Earnest—The Flickering Light—Rainstorms at Hand—Breaking up of Camp—Preparations for Crossing the Desert—The Great Caravan—Prejudice against Sea Voyages—The Bazaar's Harvest—An "Invoice"—Taking Leave of Friends.

Toward the end of our sojourn in the desert, I paid a visit to Mr. V., a Belgian mechanic in the service of the Turkish government of Bagdad, who during the cholera panic had been encamped with his family near Carara, the little village previously spoken of; several hundred wealthy native families from town were also encamped near his tents, and seemed to enjoy themselves in their own way, as much as we did in Seliman Bhag. Expecting a moonlight night, I did not hasten my departure for home, as I felt sure of being able to perform the trip to our camp, a distance of about eighteen miles, in two hours, easily, with my excellent young horse, so that I did not leave Carara much before sunset. The day had been unusually sultry, sunset had produced no change in the atmosphere, and the haze and barren hue of the southern horizon clearly indicated the close advent of the scourge of the desert, the Simoom, a scorching wind, in civilized countries better known by its Italian name of Sirocco. I had hardly arrived at the little village on the right bank of the Diyala, whose wretched inhabitants earn a scanty livelihood by ferrying travellers and caravans across the river, by means of a kind of rough, wooden ferry-boat, looking somewhat like a huge wooden shoe, attached to a long stout tow-line made of the fibres of date-tree

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leaves, and stretching across the river, a breadth of about eighty yards, when the horrid wind began to blow. I took refuge in the largest building of the village, a little hut, made of sun-dried mud or clay, standing in a small yard, surrounded by walls composed of the same material. I left my horse in the yard, gave him some mashed straw, the only feed procurable in the place, removed saddle and bridle, and retired to the furthermost corner of the hut, almost stifled with the oppressive atmosphere and the fine dust that came whirling through every fissure in the ricketty old door. My only companions in the wretched place were an old broken down Arab and his half starved dog, both of whom had buried themselves in a heap of dry grass lying in one of the corners, which appeared to me to be an omnibus bed, or one intended to accommodate all parties. This induced me to join them, and with my saddle as a pillow, and my white woolen abba, or riding-mantle, as my veil against the fine dust, I lay down near my two bed-fellows, and awaited quietly the cessation of the suffocating wind.

The Simoom or Sirocco is a scorching hot southerly wind which blows in puffs, and by doing so raises all the fine flour-like dust on the desert, and sweeps it in immense clouds over the country, threatening with suffocation both man and beast, and destroying almost anything which is not composed of stone or metal. Leather ware is rendered as hard and brittle as glass by this terrible wind; horn, bone, ivory, wood, etc., split and crack; everything made of paper or pasteboard becomes warped; catgut strings snap asunder; pianos get entirely out of tune and burst; furniture splits; human and animal hair becomes stiff, brittle and drops off; photographs fade; paint, varnish and gilding crack; even looking-glasses are totally de-

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stroyed, the quicksilver becoming liquid and running down the glass, so much so that a looking-glass repairer could easily make his fortune simply by travelling through North Africa and Arabia for the purpose of restoring the mirrors destroyed by the Sirocco. Though far from being a blessing to Arabia or Mesopotamia, the Sirocco is not nearly so destructive in those countries as it is in North Africa, especially in the dominions of Fez and Morocco, where whole caravans while travelling through the endless Sahara have met with a horrible death by suffocation. The camels obstinately refuse to proceed, lie down and are quickly buried in the stifling, glowing sand, as soon as they are overtaken by the Sirocco, which among other bad qualities has the fatal effect of causing intense thirst, totally enervating man and beast. Sometimes the men save themselves and their animals by wrapping cloaks, keffichs, blankets, etc., round their heads, thus often successfully preventing the sand getting into their respiratory organs. Fatal accidents of this kind are by no means rare, and I myself knew of a caravan which, during my stay in Bagdad, perished in this wise in the desert on its way from Bagdad to Damascus; and several of the couriers of the "Royal British Desert Mail" were lost in the same manner between these two cities above mentioned. The Sirocco blows generally during the most sultry days of August and September, and exceptionally, but very rarely, in October, and to no great extent during the two latter months of the year.

About two hours after my arrival on the banks of the Dyālah, the Simoom had completely died away; but the atmosphere had not improved by the wind, and the sky was still covered with a dense haze, which rendered the stars invisible and the night pitch-dark.

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Nevertheless I made up my mind to reach camp that night, as neither my horse nor myself could get anything decent to eat in the wretched village, besides it was only a ride of fourteen miles from the Dyālah to the camp. I thought I was well acquainted with the road, and though the night was very dark, I could not help finding the camp; even if I should lose the way, all I had to do was to keep close to the right, which must sooner or later bring me back to the banks of the Tigris, and following the course of this river, I could not help finding my place of destination. The old fellow humbly advised me to stay with him till daylight; the night was too dark, the Simoom might come on again, he said; I might lose my way, and be attacked by wild beasts, or even by robbers, who would most certainly kill me. But I remained obstinate as a mule, pointing to my two revolvers as the pill boxes for any person who might venture to meddle with me, presented him with a "Beshlik" (five piastres, a piece equal to about twenty-five cents American currency), and told him to ferry me across the river. He silently obeyed, carried my horse and myself safely over, invoked Allah's protection upon me, and then as silently recrossed the stream. Leading my horse up the steep bank, I lighted my pipe, vaulted into the saddle, and cantered out into the pitch-dark open desert. There was not the slightest danger of running over any person, or against a wall or tree, or of stumbling into a ditch or swamp, as the country from the Dyālah nearly to Cassēba, a distance of about eight miles, was as flat, dry and smooth as a billiard table. When I lighted my pipe, I also looked at my watch, and found it was just nine o'clock when I left the Dyālah. After a good long canter I stopped, lighted a fusee, and looked at my timepiece again. It was a quarter past eleven o'clock. How could that be?

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At the rate my gallant horse went over the ground, we must have come twenty miles at least, and yet I had not reached the bushes of Cassēba. It was clear that I had lost myself on the immense plain; and there I was in a predicament; how to get out of it, I was at a loss to conjecture. There I was in the desert, in a place where perhaps neither I nor anybody else had ever been before, surrounded by Egyptian darkness, which would not permit me to see my hand before my face, without a star, a light, a bush, an elevation of the ground, or anything else to guide me. I listened for the cry of some water fowl to indicate the whereabouts of the Tigris; but everything was hushed in a silence like that of the grave, not even broken by the howl of a stray jackal, and the dastardly hyena itself seemed afraid to roam over the dismal locality on such a pitch-dark night. What was I to do? It was of no earthly use to continue this Don Quixote course, as I might ride my horse's legs off, and perhaps be traveling in just the opposite direction from the place to which I was bound; moreover, my horse showed signs of fatigue, as I had cantered briskly for more than two hours without interruption. I, therefore, made up my mind not to move an inch further without knowing where I was going. I dismounted, slackened the saddle girths, sat on the ground, and waited for "something to turn up." As that "something" was rather tardy in making its appearance, I began to feel lonely and sleepy, which induced me to appeal to the faithful and ever successful comforter of the solitary hunter, the weary soldier, and the drowsy sailor—I mean the soothing tobacco pipe. Time passed on; the hands of my watch pointed to one o'clock, then to two o'clock; but as yet, my chance of relief remained apparently as distant as ever.

I was just about calculating how much longer it

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would take the lazy day to break, when I suddenly noticed a faint light far away to my left, which, however, only flickered a minute and then was completely lost to my view. Though I had not the slightest idea in what part of the compass I had seen the light, or who the people were that lighted it, I resolved that if I should be lucky enough to spy it once more, I would make directly for it regardless of the consequences; it might proceed from our camp, or from the little village on the Dyālah, from some Bedouin camp, or the beacon of some fishermen on the bank of the Tigris, or of marauders in Cassēba bushes. To my intense delight, the little flame appeared again. To tighten my saddle girths, vault into the saddle, and start at full speed towards my guiding star was the work of an instant. I rode hard for about half an hour, when, to my utter dismay, the light again disappeared; but I still kept straight ahead, though at a slackened pace, for fear of overshooting my mark. Suddenly I heard a furious barking of dogs a little ahead of me, a noise which sounded like music in my ears. Immediately after, I faintly heard the voice of a man attempting to quiet the angry curs, and at the same moment a bright light dazzled my eyes. It was high time for me to find out my whereabouts, for scarcely twenty yards in front of me I noticed the high and almost perpendicular banks of the Dyālah, with the ferry-boat that had carried me across six hours before, attached to the opposite shore. I dismounted, and began to hail the man on the other side; but he gave no answer, while the dogs resumed their boisterous occupations; seeing that the man was not inclined to notice me either through fear or laziness, and not seeing any other around the fire, I discharged one of my revolvers for the purpose of arousing the old fellow who had ferried me across. In this

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I was successful, for he soon made his appearance, and hailed me. I answered that I was the Frankee whom he had carried over the evening before; that I had lost my way, and wanted to wait in the ferry-boat till daybreak. Fully aware that he would be the recipient of a good bakshesh, and wide awake to his personal interests, the old rascal was soon on hand with his ferry-boat and transferred me to the other side, where my horse and myself took up the same quarters which we had occupied the evening before. At the first dawn of day I crossed the river again, reached Cassēba by sunrise, and passing the ruins of Ctesiphon arrived in camp in the best of humor, but hungry as a lion, and just in time for breakfast.

About a week after this adventure, our camp at Seliman-Bhagh, where we had enjoyed ourselves so much for a month, was broken up in consequence of the disappearance of cholera in town; but chiefly because the time of the annual rains was fast approaching. The rainy season of Lower Mesopotamia generally begins about the end of November and closes about the beginning of March, while during the rest of the year not a drop of rain falls. Early on the morning of the day fixed for our return to Bagdad, everybody could be seen busy packing boxes, handling leather trunks, striking tents, etc., and transporting goods and chattels on board the Comet. As soon as the task was accomplished, the ladies, small children, and servants also went on board the steamer, which soon after weighed anchor amid the firing of parting salutes, and then started up the river, followed by the cheers of the male population of our camp, who were to proceed to Bagdad on horseback. All the available horses and donkeys, about forty in number, were brought into requisition: and ten minutes after

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the departure of our calvacade the spot where for several weeks so much bustle and confusion had reigned resumed its former solitude. Half an hour afterward the only human beings to be seen there were one or two ragged Bedouins, who stealthily stalked about the precincts of our camp in search of trifles that might have been lost in the quicksands, or been intentionally left behind by the Frankees.

Some time after we arrived in town we heard that the great pilgrim caravan would shortly leave Bagdad for Mecca, a town in Arabia Felix, or Southern Arabia, distant about one hundred and fifty miles from Dsheddah, or Jeddah, a small seaport on the eastern coast. Mecca, as everybody knows, is the birth-place and burial-place of Mohammed, the illustrious prophet, and founder of the "Islam" faith, who, as I have previously mentioned, was born there in April, 571, of our Christian era; and shortly after his death, which took place in 632, was brought there and interred; Mohammed being recognized by all adherents of Islam as their prophet, the man who stands next to God; in consequence of which belief Mecca, since it contains the remains of Mohammed, is considered by all Moslems to be their chief place of worship and pilgrimage, just what Jerusalem was to the Christians at the time of the Crusades, and still is. The believers of no other creed in the world adhere so strictly to the dictates of their religion as do the Moslems, the height of whose worldly ambition is to obtain the cognomen of "Haji," or "Hadjee," *i. e.*, "Pilgrim to the Holy City," a title put before their personal names, and the only means of obtaining this distinction so intensely coveted is the performance of a journey to Mecca. This journey is by no means an easy thing for anybody, but very difficult for poor devils of Turkey, Mesopo-

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tamia, Persia, India or Afghanistan, their countries being very remote from Mecca. They have to traverse from two to five thousand miles, which involves considerable expense, even to the most economical travelers, who journey singly, not to mention those who take a whole train of women, servants and slaves along with them; as, for instance, a certain East Indian ex-queen (since the Indian revolt a resident of Bagdad), who, during my residence at "the city of the Califs," chartered a large steamer from a Bombay steam navigation company at an enormous price, for the purpose of conveying Her Royal Highness from Bassorah to Dsheddah, whence she intended to proceed to Mecca. Very few of the faithful can afford to spend money as freely as the above named person, and thousands upon thousands of poor men proceed annually by sea and by land on their pilgrimage, as body-guards, grooms, barbers, secretaries, etc., to parties who can afford to pay for their services, and bear their traveling expenses. The easiest and cheapest way for most of the Moslems to proceed to Mecca is by sea, as they can travel on shipboard within two or three days' journey from Mecca. Until lately, however, they have always evinced a great aversion to sea voyages, carrying their prejudice to such an extent that they prefer the numerous toils and dangers of a six or twelve months' journey over the burning sands of Arabia to the comparatively trifling drawbacks of a sea voyage. Last year, however, an enterprising Bombay firm obtained permission from the Pasha of Bagdad to convey pilgrims for Mecca from Bassorah, the seaport of Irak Arabi (Lower Mesopotamia) to Dsheddah, provided that the ship or steamer intended for this purpose should have a Mohammedan commander and crew, and be exclusively used for the conveyance of Moslem passengers. These

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conditions were accepted, and the ship started in due time, with a full cargo of Moslems, arriving safely at Dsheddah, and proving, as I was informed, a very profitable enterprise to her owners. From thirty to sixty thousand pilgrims annually congregate around Bagdad from Bokhara, Afghanistan, Persia, Koordistan and Mesopotamia, for the purpose of joining the great Mecca caravan, which generally leaves Bagdad at the approach of cool weather. Thousands had already arrived, awaiting with patience and true Moslem gravity, the completion of the huge caravan by the daily arrival of smaller caravans from all parts of Western Asia. The narrow thoroughfares of the city of the Caliphs, for many weeks previous to the departure of the religious devotees of the doctrines of Mohammed, presented a most interesting appearance. Too narrow already for the usual population of the city, these thoroughfares became daily more crowded with Moslem representatives (principally males) of all the nations of Asia and Africa, displaying such variety of costumes, physiognomies, manners and customs as can be met with only in the great mercantile centres of Asia and Africa. The extensive bazaars of the famous city became naturally the chief rendezvous of these foreigners, who, though bound on a religious journey, did not think it improper to combine sacred with mercantile business, and therefore brought with them great quantities of merchandise and the produce of their native countries, which they were all anxious to dispose of in the bazaars of Bagdad.

Never before did I see the market of any Oriental city so overstocked with goods of every description as I had the pleasure of witnessing in Bagdad at that period. Every imaginable article of manufacture or produce indigenous to Western Asia, mingled with an

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immense variety of European merchandise, could be seen exhibited at this improptu world's fair. The finest shawls of Cashmere; the coarsest of Arabian canvas; the most dazzling diamond, ruby, emerald and turquoise jewelry that had ever been produced by India, Bokhara and Persia, down to the most insignificant brass or zinc ornament; from the most beautifully finished shot-guns of English or French workmanship down to the unwieldy Afghan blunderbuss and the original Bedouin match-lock; from the most delicious rose oil and other perfumes of the Orient down to the most horribly smelling fish oil. In short, everything was to be had during that period for money or money's value. But this bustle was not restricted to the city only, but also to the suburbs, the inhabitants of which, mostly agriculturists and cattle herders, thronged the numerous gates from sunrise to sunset in their eager attempts to provide the overcrowded city with vegetables and fruit of every kind; besides eggs, milk, butter, cheese, corn, poultry, fresh game, firewood, etc.; which necessaries of life were transported to town on the backs of thousands of donkeys; which animals, on their return home with their empty baskets on their backs, were constantly getting into direful confusion with herds of sheep and goats driven to town for the butchers. Often have I seen the narrow gates blocked up by these animals, harassed on all sides by the sticks and unearthly yells of their drivers; which foolish proceedings naturally only served to increase the dreadful confusion, presenting a scene which entirely defies description.

The suburbs of the right-bank city were literally covered with tents inhabited by people who would not or could not find shelter in the overcrowded city. Those who *would not* live within the town walls were

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chiefly Bedouins from the desert and the banks of the Euphrates, who are all greatly averse to town life, having passed their whole existence in the open air; but had been attracted to the city by the great demand for camels, horses, mules and donkeys, unavoidably required by the pilgrims for their journey to Mecca. The Bedouins had brought thousands upon thousands of these animals with them, and for some time did a brisk and highly profitable trade, knowing, as they did, that they could command almost any price for their animals, as the pilgrims must have them.

On the day fixed for the departure of the caravan, just before sunrise, I rode with my friends over the pontoon which stretches across the Tigris in the centre of the city, and passing the limits of the right-bank city, soon reached the vast plains stretching between the monument of Zobeida and Sidd Nimrud (median wall), where a grand sight presented itself to our eyes. Upward of eighty thousand people, intermixed with at least a hundred thousand camels, horses, mules and donkeys—the former dressed in their various costumes, and the latter gaudily caparisoned and fully equipped with all the paraphernalia requisite for the journey—covered the plain almost as far as the eye could reach. The immense mass of people, the deafening noise produced by the mixture of so many human and animal voices, the bustle, the glitter of innumerable lance-heads, silver-mounted sabres, guns, pistols, etc., in the first rays of the rising sun, presented a picture impossible for my pen to describe, and never to be effaced from my memory.

Here fathers, sons, husbands, relatives and friends were taking leave of their families by tender embraces, and each bestowing a parting kiss on the other's shoulders. There, inhabitants of Bagdad consoling a few

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young women whose husbands have already taken leave of them, and whom they will probably never see again alive. Here, a sobbing young wife, surrounded by her parents, brothers and sisters. Rather than live all the while in suspense as to the fate of her lord and master, she is determined to accompany him, sharing with him the toils and dangers of the enormous journey. Here are a couple of dashing horsemen vaulting into their saddles; there a group of swarthy Bedouins trying to make an obstreperous camel lie down to receive its rider or his luggage. There a dervish (a wandering Moslem priest, or rather devotee, living upon alms), with long beard and tattered garments, stalking gravely through the crowd; here a youngster, having lost himself in the confusion, crying bitterly for his father and mother. Here a couple of burly Persians mounted on lively "rahwans"—ponies with the peculiar gait already described; there a number of Arabs on horses of the finest breed; and there a troop of Bedouins, with faces muffled up to their eyes, squatted on the backs of tall and powerful dromedaries, which they pilot admirably through the dense crowd to join the ranks of the already apparently endless caravan. The vanguard of the caravan, consisting chiefly of Bedouin guides and a heavily armed escort, started on the journey long before sunrise and has already disappeared in the haze of the distant horizon; while the caravan itself, like the body of a mammoth snake, winds slowly but steadily across the immense plain, in the direction of "Hît," or "Heet," a little town on the right bank of the river Euphrates, about sixty miles west of Bagdad, where the pilgrims cross that river at a very shallow place. Thence they proceed, keeping always within ten miles of the river, towards "Wady Suwab"—*i. e.*, Valley (of the river) Suwab

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—which stream is a right-hand tributary of the Euphrates.

From there they cross the Syrian desert in a westerly direction until they reach "Tadmoi"—better known as the Ruins of Palmyra—and thence they continue their route across another terribly arid territory, first westward and then south-westward, to "Demesk-esh-Sham" (Damascus). In this queen city of Syria the pilgrims rest for about a fortnight; during which time their enormous caravan daily increases by the incorporation of smaller pilgrim caravans from Syria, Koordistan, and Asia Minor, all of which rendezvous at Damascus; whence the entire mammoth caravan, on a certain day known to every Moslem in that part of the world, starts on the regular "Dērb-el-Hādsh-ēsh-Shāmi"—*i. e.*, "Syrian Pilgrim Road"—due south towards the shores of the Red Sea; and thence, *via* Medina, to Mecca.

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XV.

BAGDAD LEFT BEHIND.

Arabian Customs—Selecting Escorts—Stock Partnership in the Arab Horse—Our Picket Guard—Sanctity for the Steed—The Oath—Bedouin Hospitality—The Imperial Firman—Royal "Desert Mail" Oxfa—French Enterprise—"Dachterwan"—An Arab Horse Shoe.

It was toward the end of the month of July that Signor P. reappeared in Bagdad with twelve of the most beautiful, thoroughbred stallions I ever saw, escorted by a gang of about forty swarthy, savage-looking Bedouins, with faces emaciated, and muffled, not unlike Egyptian mummies, with deeply set, jet black eyes, of sparkling brightness and piercing keenness. They were all very badly mounted; though their tribe owns the most magnificent horses to be found in Mesopotamia, or anywhere else, the wily fellows, with the precaution which characterizes most Bedouin tribes, took care to leave their good horses at home, well-taught by sad experience that by bringing them into Bagdad they might attract the attention of the Pasha, the Cadi (judge), or the Rais Pasha (brigadier-general), who might covet the stately animals, and with well-known gubernatorial sense of justice, either offer to the luckless owner a price of about one-fourth the value of his horse, or if he should refuse to part with it at such a price, he may find himself quietly arrested on some pretence, before he is many hours older. His horse, the unmistakeable cause of his sudden imprisonment, is also taken care of; but, of course, most mysteriously disappears during his confinement. Should the unlucky prisoner ever be fortunate enough to be set at liberty and

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that the audacity to make inquiries as to what had become of his four-footed friend, no one ever knows anything about it; but the best advice to be given the poor Bedouin is to leave town immediately, if he would not wish being imprisoned again, or swallowing something in his coffee that will not agree with his stomach. As I said, the Bedouins escorting Signor P. rode, for obvious reasons, inferior horses commonly called by the Arabs "gheddish." Their equipment, too, was not of such a description as to excite the cupidity of others. They wore the common long, loose gown of brown sheeps' wool gathered round the loins with a woollen scarf or rope, over their shoulders hung the usual white "abba," or Turkish burnous, previously described as worn by nearly all the Bedouin tribes, as well as the people of Mespotamia, Arabia, and North Africa. They were all barefooted, had long, shaggy, coal-black hair, scanty beards and moustachios, except two or three old fellows, whose hair and beards were almost snowy white, and their heads covered with the usual keffich (the large multi-colored and sometimes richly tasselled handkerchiefs worn by Arabs on their heads and shoulders). Their saddles of peculiar shape, with extremely narrow seat, conspicuously high pommels, and saddle-bows were covered with tanned goat skin, ornamented with coarse embroidery, and furnished with large quadrangular stirrup-irons, suspended by leather straps. This kind of stirrup-iron is peculiar to the Moslem. Its base is slightly convex and large enough for the entire foot of the rider to rest upon, while its sharp corners serve him for spurs. Their bridles were of ribbons manufactured from goat's hair. The bit was of wrought iron, and also of peculiar shape, having a ring of about three and a half inches in diameter attached to the middle of the cross bar or mouth-piece, just large

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enough to be passed over the lower jaw of the horse. By pulling the reins the ring presses on the under jaw, thus acting on it as a kind of lever. It is a most cruel bridle, and punishes a horse severely when energetically pulled; but is entirely out of place on Arabian horses which are so remarkably gentle and docile. All the members of the escort carried lances from ten to twelve feet in length, the original and favorite weapon of the Bedouins, which they handle with great skill. They were also provided with the usual carved double-edged dagger, or kris, worn by nearly all Arabs. As to firearms, only a few possessed any, and they consisted of the long-barrelled Arabian gun, and belt pistols. They all belonged to a sub-tribe of the Shamnir Bedouins, called the "Sacclavi Simbri," temporarily encamped on the plain, between the three previously described lakes, Hindijia, Bahr Nedjes, and Chor Allah, and the right bank of the river Euphrates, probably the very tribe which twelve years ago made the attack on the expedition of the gunboat "Comet;" but this, however, they strenuously deny.

As Signor P. had bought the greater part of his horses from this tribe, and had enjoyed their hospitality for over two months, he thought it best to select his escort from among them, well knowing that they had rather suffer death, than allow any of their famous horses to fall into the hands of a marauding rival tribe. It is a well known peculiarity of the Bedouin tribes who are most famous for their horses; that although they do not object to selling their best stallions (provided they get their price and the purchaser agrees to send them across the sea), for no consideration are any of them sold, given, or in any other way transferred to the possession of another Bedouin tribe. Such indeed is the importance of this condition in the bargain that

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the purchaser is not only obliged to sign a paper to this effect, but they actually force him to take an oath, according to the customs of his religion, that he will not violate the condition; death and theft of the animal being the only exceptions to the rule. In order that such an event may be made almost an impossibility, the Sheiks of the Sacclavi Simbri had given Signor P., who pretended to buy the horses for the Sultan Abdul Aziz and not for France, an escort of forty men, to see him safely through the territory infested with rival Bedouin tribes. Luckily for both sellers and purchasers, no accident happened to the horses, and they arrived safely in Bagdad Had there been any attempts by marauding bands of other tribes to get possession of the horses the escort would certainly have defended them with their lives, or at any rate would never have returned home to their tents on the bank of the Euphrates unless they had succeeded in stealing them again from anybody but their lawful owners. The Bedouins are far more particular with their brood mares, with which they never part under any consideration whatever; no matter what amount may be offered, or who may want them, it would not be of half so much consequence in their estimation for half a dozen members of their tribe to be murdered, as to lose a famous brood mare, either by theft, disease, or accident. She is the pride of the men, the favorite of the women, the playmate of the children, and her loss is bemoaned by every member of the tribe. Anxiously watched, and kept in view day and night like a priceless jewel by keen eyes, it is by no means an easy task even for the most cunning horse thief to elope with her. In many instances, especially when she is in foal, she is not only living in a tent pitched for her special use, but is continually fettered with strong iron

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shackles round the pasterns of her fore-legs, and the key of these shackles is always kept by the chief of the tribe, or one of the owners. Generally among Arabs, but chiefly among the Bedouins, valuable horses, especially celebrated brood mares, are owned by two, three, four, or even more parties. The animal is thus a sort of joint stock property, divided into shares, which are bought and sold among the members of their family, tribe, and community, or acquaintances, just as railway shares, bonds, etc., change hands in a stock exchange in the United States. It thus happens, perhaps, that some horse is partly owned by one party in the Desert, another in Bagdad, and a third in Bassorah. The one who feeds the horse is entitled to its use, but is not allowed under any pretence to part with the animal, its foal, or its services, unless he has the written consent of each of the stockholders. The purpose of this joint ownership is palpable enough. It is thus arranged so that in case the horse should be lost by theft or disease, the pecuniary loss will not fall so heavily on one person; insurance companies being of course unknown as yet in Arabia and Mesopotamia.

A large Bedouin camp is, moreover, carefully watched by several hundred big, powerfully built, shaggy-haired dogs, notorious for their ferocity, and famous throughout the East for their watchfulness. They announce the approach of a stranger by a furious barking when he is at an almost incredible distance, even when quite out of sight. Woe to the stranger who dares to enter the camp unless he is on horseback, and consequently out of their reach. If on foot he would be instantly torn to pieces by the furious curs, but for the energetic interference of the inmates of the camp. In spite of these extraordinary precautions, it sometimes happens that a cunning thief succeeds in

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making off with the coveted steed. A well-known traveler is authority for the following: One evening, just before nightfall, one of these wandering lords of the desert, badly mounted and equipped, approached the camp of a foreign Bedouin tribe, far-famed for the excellence of its horses in general, but especially for the possession of a beautiful black mare, said to be unequaled in speed by any horse in the desert. As fate would have it, the first person the stranger met on approaching the camp was the lucky owner of this equine paragon. His hospitality was instantly claimed by the wayfarer, and of course readily granted by his unsuspicious victim, as hospitality is one of the chief ordinances of Mohammed, and rigorously exercised by the Bedouins even toward their most bitter enemies. The stranger pretended to belong to a friendly tribe; that he had been gazelle hunting with a party, but had been separated from his companions and chased by marauders. His lean horse, indeed, was in distress, but he had purposely tired and lamed it to make his story appear plausible. As may be surmised he was nothing but a professional horse thief, bent upon securing the famous black mare. Every circumstance seemed to favor the wily scoundrel. The atmosphere that night was unusually oppressive and sultry, plunging even the savage and proverbially wakeful dogs into a sort of lethargy. Stealthily he arose in the middle of the night, cautiously crept up to the spot where the mare stood, put on the bridle, noiselessly removed the shackles, and was just about leading her quietly past the outermost tents of the camp, when one of the dogs gave the alarm, joined at once by all the others. Quick as lightning the audacious villain vaulted on the bare-backed steed, and disappeared phantom-like in the darkness. The next moment the loss was discovered,

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the camp aroused, and a few moments later some two hundred dashing horsemen divided into small bands, and riding in different directions, swept over the boundless desert, vowing vengeance on the daring fugitive.

Onward and onward they speed over the desolate plains with gazelle-like velocity. Hours pass away, but their maddening course never slackened, nor a word passed between them; but their silence is more eloquent than language, and their pinched features, convulsively closed mouths and flashing eyes, are unmistakably expressive of determination and vengeance. Woe to the wretch if they overtake him. Presently a slight tinge of gray appears on the starry firmament, toward the east, which slowly increases its dimensions. The little, glimmering stars fade rapidly away—even the morning star begins to glitter very unsteadily, and finally disappears altogether. The gloomy shades of night vanish in half an hour more, and a slightly copper-colored cloud in the eastern horizon heralds the advent of the messenger of day. But who comes thundering along at such a fearful pace over the barren plains, straight along as if toward the goal on a race course? It is a race for life or death. The flying fugitive is the wild horse thief, and his pursuers, hospitable Bedouins. How the earth trembled as the frantic racers approach closer! How nobly the beautiful mare keeps the lead; but, lo! she must be overtaken, for her rider, though a rascal and a wonderful horseman, is riding bareback, and has no other means of urging her on than the heels of his naked feet and his husky voice, which appears strange to her. A few strides more and the most ardent of his pursuers will be by his side. "Pinch her left ear, oh, kafir!" (one of the greatest insults one Moslem can give to another

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is to call him kafir, or unbeliever). "Pinch her in the left ear, oh, kafir," yells once more the old, gray-haired fellow, who is about to grasp the fugitive. The thief takes the hint, and, to his utter astonishment, thus urged onward, as her lawful master had taught her from her youth, the mare dashed away from her pursuers, and is soon lost to sight. "Allah agbar" (God is great), "Allah kérim" (God is good), exclaims the proud but hapless Bedouin, as he gives up the now useless chase, and sees his beloved steed banish forever from his sight. Being questioned by his companions as to his reasons for giving, with his own tongue, to the rascally fugitive information as to the only possible way of escape, he answered, choked by his grief: "That mare has never yet been overtaken by any steed; rather would I lose her forever than that she should lose her reputation." An answer, from a Bedouin standpoint, worthy of a hero.

Another beautiful anecdote is told, by the same traveler, illustrative of the sanctity with which hospitality is regarded by the Bedouins. Two Bedouins of different tribes became involved in a quarrel one day in the open desert, and which resulted in one of the disputants being stabbed to the heart. The murderer, who happened to be traveling alone, fled immediately after the commission of the bloody deed, but of course was closely pursued by the companions of the murdered man. Seeing that he would be finally overtaken, he piloted his horse straight toward a Bedouin camp, which he had spied in the distance, being fully aware that he would be a doomed man, and instantly cut to pieces by his pursuers, if overtaken before he could reach the camp and claim the hospitality of one of the tribe, who would be bound to protect the fugitive with his own life, if he could be lucky enough to cross the

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threshold of his protector's tent before being overtaken. Of course, the murderer urged his steed to its utmost speed, and reached the uttermost tent of the camp before his vindictive enemies could come up with him. To vault from his panting horse, rush into the tent and lay hold of the silver beard of an old, shriveled Bedouin (the customary way of applying for protection among the wild sons of the desert), was the work of an instant for the hunted-down criminal. To this prompt action he owed his safety; for no sooner had the two entered the tent together than the blood-thirsty gang thundered up to the spot, bringing to the old man the news that he harbored the murderer of his only son. As fate would have it, the murderer had unconsciously sought and found protection from his ardent pursuers, not only in their own camp, but in the very tent of the father of his victim. Awful must have been the news to the bereft father; but the old man and the would-be avengers both held hospitality as too sacred to be violated, even in such extremities. The fugitive and his horse were properly cared for by the old man; but a little after midnight the latter cautiously awakened his strange guest and told him to make ready to start if he valued his life; indicated to him the direction in which he would have to proceed to reach the camp of his own tribe, about thirty miles distant, in the quickest manner possible. He promised to allow him half an hour's start (timed by the hour-glass); but cautioned him that immediately after the lapse of that time he would be on the track of his enemy with one hundred and fifty horsemen, and take blood for blood, if they succeeded in overtaking him. I need not say that his guest did not tarry much longer, or spare his horse in his race for life or death. Half an hour after his departure one hundred and fifty

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horsemen, led by the old man, well and splendidly armed and mounted on their fastest steeds, dashed off into the darkness and swept over the dismal desert, hunting for the fugitive, whose steed must have made good time, as his pursuers returned without man or beast.

The grant of hospitality and protection with the Bedouins is not an exclusive privilege of the adult male sex, but also of females, provided they be married. No such grant is so much respected by them, as that of an enceinte woman; such indeed is the respect paid to this duplicate of humanity, that the clutching of the hem of her dress by the intended victim is certain to save the life of the otherwise doomed man, even if this should happen in the open desert far away from any tent.

The arrival of so many beautiful horses, escorted by members of a Bedouin tribe very rarely seen within the walls of Bagdad, created quite a commotion among the inhabitants, who are all, more or less, good judges of horseflesh. Bagdad, indeed, was till lately the chief market in Asia for Arab horses. But a firman or decree was issued by the present Sultan Abdul Aziz, that during the next four years no thorough-bred Arab horses should be exported from the Turkish empire. Heretofore five thousand or more were annually sent from Bagdad alone to all parts of the world, but chiefly to India, where some of them have been sold for twenty thousand rupees ($10,000 in gold). Horse-dealers have offered such enticing prices to the Bedouins of Mesopotamia (justly celebrated for the purity of blood of its stock), that they have parted with nearly all their finest breed. To recruit this rapidly diminishing race of the noblest horses in the world, the imperial firman was issued, and any person detected transgressing it is

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cast into prison, or the horses are confiscated by government. Though the firman was still in force at the time of our stay in Bagdad, it was no obstacle to Signor P., who was the bearer of a written permission, signed by the Sultan himself, to purchase and export the requisite number of horses for the Sultan's august cousin, the ex-premier of France; Abdul Aziz being probably aware that it would be bad policy to refuse such a trifling courtesy, as his great cousin in France might return his impoliteness with interest. Shortly before the arrival of the horses in Bagdad, two hundred camels, one hundred and eighty water buffaloes, and sixty-two white donkeys arrived there also in charge of Bedouins from the banks of the lower Euphrates, where Signor P. had bought them for the present Viceroy of Egypt to restock that country with these useful animals, immense numbers of which had been lost there about two years ago, by an unknown disease, a sort of cattle plague. The camels, buffaloes, and donkeys were at once dispatched to Egypt by way of Koordistan, Syria and Palestine, in charge of about fifty Arabs from Bagdad; strange to say, though these animals had to travel over nearly three thousand miles of desert, and to undergo all sorts of hardships, especially hunger and thirst, not one of them died on the road, but all arrived in the land of the Pharaohs safe and sound, excepting two camels that were probably stolen. By dint of liberal presents to the Sheiks or chiefs of the wild Bedouin tribes of the Aneizee, Shammr and others who roamed over the desert extending south of the Euphrates, between Lower Mesopotamia and Syria, the British Government had already succeeded in establishing an overland mail rout between Bagdad and Damascus, or rather between Bagdad and Beyrout (the chief seaport of Syria), straight across the desert. In return for the

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annual tribute of forty thousand Turkish piastres (about $1800) paid to them by the British Government, the Sheiks agree to let the mail riders pass unmolested through their territory, provided they carry nothing but letters, and to furnish them also in case of accident with fresh dromedaries that they may continue their journey. As may be presumed the mail riders are selected from among the Bedouins, the greater number belonging to the Aneizee, the most powerful of all the tribes, who claim to be the lawful owners of the greatest part of the territory over which the mail riders have to travel.

The Aneizee Bedouin moreover, like his camel and his horse, is famous all through Arabia for his endurance, courage and prowess, particularly in piloting his living craft, the faithful dromedary, through an almost interminable ocean of sand. The animals used for this desert mail service are a kind of fleet dromedary, called "heiri" by the Bedouins, is considerably smaller than the camel or dromedary of burden, its frame less powerful, the skin less thick and the hair not so coarse; but the body is more compact, its gait more elastic, and every motion of its body is quicker. In short, the thoroughbred "heiri" stands in the same relation to the camel or dromedary as the race horse does to the dray horse. They are never used for carrying loads, as they will not move an inch if made to carry dead weight; but they are remarkably fleet and persevering, and will easily carry a man from eighty to one hundred miles a day across the sandy desert, for several consecutive weeks performing for instance the journey from Bagdad to Damascus, a distance of about five hundred miles, in from five to seven days. They seem to know no other gait than a peculiar kind of long heavy swinging trot, very tiresome to those unused to this kind of traveling,

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causing them for the first two or three days excruciating pain in the chest, spine and loins, also in the small of the back, and dreadful headache, producing in fact very much the same feeling as that caused by sea-sickness. This is as I have already stated, owing to the peculiar gait of these animals, which consists in moving the two legs on the same side of the body together, striking out the left fore and hind leg together, and then the two right legs, while the horse, donkey, ox, etc., never move the two legs on the same side simultaneously, but always the left fore leg and the right hind leg and vice versa. The former gait is peculiar to the dromedary, the Bactrian, or two humped camel, and the camelopard or giraffe, which animals seem to owe to this peculiarity the capacity of running all day long at this swinging sort of trot, so that it is sometimes almost impossible to stop them when once they are fairly started. It is a sight worth seeing, and truly characteristic of Arabian life, to see one of these sable sons of the desert equipped for a solitary journey across the sandy ocean, leave the hospitable gates of the city of the Califs, for the distant shores of the Mediterranean, perched cross legged on his dromedary's back, the upper part of the body moving compulsively forward and backward like a living pendulum keeping time to the swinging motion of the animal which carries him on the monotonous journey. There he sits muffled up not unlike an Egyptian mummy in his brightly colored keffich, and the ample fold of his long abba. From the peculiarly shaped saddle dangle right and left, numerous leather bags, those on the right side contain the Royal British mail, while those on the left side contain the scanty provisions of the frugal traveler, consisting of a few pounds of hard dried dates, a few handfuls of rice, a slice of "basterman," a kind of sun

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dried meat, and a small bag made of goatskin and filled with water, the heiri he bestrides has had food and water, before he started, and has now to trot one or two hundred miles, before it reaches a place where it can replenish its stomach.

The hardy Bedouin mail rider is armed only with two pistols, and a scimeter, lances or guns being too cumbersome playthings on such a forced march. By the side of the mail rider canters a horseman equipped with all the paraphernalia of a Bedouin, probably a friend who will escort him a short distance. A few hundred yards beyond the gate, the two Bedouins exchange a few short sentences, the horseman suddenly swerves his horse round and leaves the other to pilot his "ship of the desert," the bearer of the "royal British desert mail," over the unspeakably tiresome ocean of sand as best he can. Seven days and nights the faithful animal speeds silently yet cheerfully and without hardly ever requiring encouragement by word or whip over the apparently endless gravelike solitude, so dreadfully monotonous that the stern pilot almost involuntarily shudders at the sound of his own voice. Yet in spite of the truly awful prospect before him, should the strength of his faithful dromedary give way, or should his sleepy eyes, rendered bloodshot by cruel and almost incessant wakefulness, assisted by the heat and dust, mistake his usual guiding star for another of the myriads visible in the firmament, nothing short of a special miracle can save him and his mute companion from the most horrible of deaths,a death from the want of water, the terrors of which nobody can even know, unless they have themselves experienced the agonies of thirst. Let us suppose that in his wanderings he is lucky enough to reach a camp of wild Bedouins, belonging to his own tribe. As soon as they discover him, he

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is immediately surrounded, and all that he carries with him is minutely examined. Any letters containing a hard object is unceremoniously torn open, and its contents generally abstracted, but the letter itself is usually returned without being torn in pieces. Should he fall into the hands of any other wandering tribe than his own he is robbed of everything, and must consider it a great favor if stripped of every stitch of clothing, and all the arms and ammunition he owns, he is allowed to pick up the letters composing the mail, which are torn and scattered over the ground, to proceed with his life. The faithful heiri, the property of the British Government for which from ten to twenty thousand Turkish piasters, from $450 to $900 in gold, have been paid, is most probably confiscated, and a miserably slow old dromedary, scarcely worth thirty dollars, given him in its stead. Outrageous as is this Bedouin rascality, it must be borne, as there is no way of punishing the rascals. All the armies of Europe and America combined could do nothing against a single one of these vagabonds, as the wily fellow would simply retreat into the desert, and lead all who attempted to follow him into certain destruction. One might as well try to catch a ground shark on the botton of the Atlantic Ocean, as to catch one of these highwaymen of the desert.

The privations, dangers, and sufferings which the wretched mail rider meets, and the courage he displays on every journey, truly constitute him a hero, unhappily all the reward he ever gets, if he succeeds in arriving safely, is one thousand Turkish piasters, or about forty-five dollars in gold, a low price for a human life. Owing to the comparative success of the Royal British Desert Mail route, a party of French merchants of Beyrout formed a company several years ago, for the purpose of laying out a direct caravan route between

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ROYAL TURKISH MAIL AND ESCORT.

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Bagdad and Beyrout. Count de B——, a resident of Beyrout, and manager of the undertaking, visited the Aneizee Shammr, and other tribes along the intended route for the purpose of making a treaty with them, regarding the free and safe passage of future caravans through the territory; he was accompanied by a large party composed of two interpreters, one of whom was an European, two Arab guides, one Arab scribe and about a dozen well armed Bedouins, all well mounted on fleet dromedaries. This little caravan, after leaving Beyrout in the beginning of March of the year above mentioned, proceeded to Damascus, and thence in a northeasterly direction pass the ruins of Palmyra, or Tadmor, straight toward the southern bank of the river Euphrates, following the downward course of which they reached Bagdad with comparative ease. But owing to their having been obliged to visit every tribe along the route to arrange the treaty with them, the journey lasted over three months. A great quantity of money and presents were distributed among the different tribes by the enterprising company. The Bedouins seemed perfectly satisfied, and received their visitors with great hospitality, promising to do everything that was required of them, and the expedition arrived at Bagdad in high glee over their success. Hitherto all caravans bound from Syria to Bagdad had, owing to the insecurity of the desert from Damascus northeast across the desert (the Royal British Desert mail track) to make an immense circuit, going as far north as Aleppo, or Haleb, crossing the Euphrates at Biradshick, and proceeding by way of Orfa and Mardin, two considerable cities of Upper Mesopotamia, to Mossul, the capital of the province, and thence along the Tigris, down to Bagdad, a circuit of at least four hundred miles. The new caravan route would there-

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fore have proved a great deal shorter, and very welcome indeed to merchants and travelers; the sequel, however, will show how far this French enterprise proved to be successful. During his visit to Bagdad, the Count de B. resided with Monsieur P., his brother-in-law, and Vice-Consul of France, in that city; the mother and wife of the latter gentleman, after several years' residence, were anxious to proceed with their relative, the Count, to Beyrout, where he had invited them to come for a year or two, to restore their health, as the intense heat of the climate in Lower Mesopotamia greatly reduces the vigor of Europeans residing there, especially of females. The two ladies were assured by the Vice-Consul that as soon as he could obtain official leave from his Government, he would follow them to Syria, never to return to Bagdad; so they were glad to accept the invitation of the Count, who, by the way, was a warm friend of my traveling companion, Signor P. Each of these gentlemen was at the head of a small caravan, and as both believed in the old adage "Union makes strength," they resolved to travel together, and the day of departure was fixed for the 30th of August. Both parties went at once to work, that their caravans might be properly equipped. Count de B. bought the necessary mules, and the "dachterwans," a kind of spacious sedan chair, fixed on mules or horses, the usual mode of taveling among aged and feeble persons in the Orient, particularly among the Persians, Turcomans and Tartars. There are two kinds of dachterwans, one very much resembling an East Indian palanquin, but furnished with two poles like a sedan chair, to be carried by two mules or horses, one in front of the other, straps running across their backs holding the palanquin or sedan suspended, and preserving its equilibrium by means of a kind of felt saddle lashed securely

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with straps on the animal's backs; the other kind of dachterwan is not very different, but is destitute of poles, and therefore only intended for one horse or mule, forming thus a kind of sheltered saddle large enough for two persons to sit in, and is lashed on the animal's back with tough leather straps like an ordinary saddle. This is more in use than the former, as it costs less, and requires but one animal to carry it; but is less steady, as it is continually rocking or balancing itself when the animal is in motion, so that it is more liable to capsize than the other; many travelers prefer it, however, especially on a rough road, or mountain pass, as it can be more easily carried around sharp curves. The dachterwan, as its name shows, is of Persian origin, and is most extensively used in that country. Beside these vehicles, Count de B. had to have several tents, camels, horses, etc., while Signor P. had to have all his horses shod, which was no easy matter; for, though naturally gentle, they would not willingly submit to such an operation, never having been shod before. It is not customary among the Bedouins, their horses' hoofs being kept so hard that they do not require shoes. It is only the Arabs in town who shoe their animals, having no doubt learned the custom from the Persians or Turks. The horse shoes they manufacture are of peculiar shape; they are not a sixth of an inch in thickness, made of the best soft iron and furnished with an exceedingly sharp edge around the lower surface. They cover the whole base of the hoof except in the centre, where a small oval hole is left for the admittance of fresh air, which is absolutely necessary, as the hoof would otherwise become soft and putrid. A rivet joins the two ends of the shoe, which is slightly turned upward at this spot and the point opposite, so as to fit the base of the shoe to perfection. The shoe is fixed with five

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sharp pointed, thin, square nails of exceedingly soft and flexible iron, about an inch and a half in length, of which three are driven into the outside, and two inside the circumference of the horse shoe. They adhere to the horse's hoof very well, last a long time, are very light, and protect the hoof from stones better than any of our American or European horse shoes. They never cut the horse's feet or legs, can be bought from any hardware dealer in Arabia, can be easily put on by anybody, can be carried on a journey without trouble, and are less dangerous on the feet of vicious horses than our heavy shoes. In short, I consider them much superior to ours, especially for saddle and light carriage horses.

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XVI.

FORWARD MARCH.

An Oriental Picture—The Signal—Red and Yellow Again—Order of March—Approach of Twilight—First Halt—The Sleepy Khanjee—Mysterious Movements—Asleep on the Roof—Kibrisli—Rachmans—Lively News—"Speak Arabic"—The Abyssinian Girl—Two Days Detention—Loorian Desert—The Wrong Path—Fifty Thousand Camels—Strange Observers—Fatal White Spot—Faithful Felix—Kiffri—A Rough Experience—Suspicious Characters—An Accident.

The 30th of August finally arrived, and about 3 P. M. the open square, situated outside the town walls, between the northern gate, or Bab-el-Madem, and the quarantine building, which had been fixed upon as the meeting ground for the two caravans, presented a very lively appearance, and a thoroughly Oriental one, differing much from its usual deserted aspect during the heat of the day. The centre of the square was occupied by about sixteen dromedaries, tall, sturdy animals, some of them already laden with leather trunks, boxes, tents, beds, provisions, "toolochs" or water-bags, firewood, in short, with all the requisites of a European travelling party, determined to make the journey over the desolate and scantily inhabited regions of Mesopotamia with as much comfort as possible. Two delicate European ladies, and a little girl, attended by two Arabian female nurses, formed part of the caravan. The dromedaries stood, immoveable as statues, stretching their long necks, and surveying with the clear, soft, wondering look peculiar to them, the motley crowd of lookers on that had issued from the gates of the city to witness the departure.

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The men among the crowd no doubt came for the purpose of seeing the beautiful horses about to leave their native land forever, while the women were anxious to get a glimpse of the two ladies from Frankistân. Few of them, perhaps, had ever seen an European female before, they being exceedingly scarce in Bagdad. It is not customary in Bagdad for ladies to go into the street often, and never without being attended by one or two cavasses, or armed servants, who, however, are not so much needed as a guard against insult, of which there is scarcely any danger, as to clear a passage for the ladies through the crowd of men, horses, donkeys, etc. The natives feel a sort of awe and servile respect for European women, or rather for the entire female sex of European descent, almost painful to see, and will press themselves in a corner, or against the wall, on her approach through these narrow thoroughfares. The grave Persian looks up and stares at the object of his interest, quite regardless of the consequences of his inattention to business; the slovenly Turkish officer draws himself up to his full height, hurriedly buttoning his threadbare coat; the ragged Bedouin hides his dark brown chest, generally exposed to view; the female native, ambling through the street, as soon as she spies her European sister is all attention, and either throws her head backward, or slightly raises her protecting "pagee," or stiff veil, to get a better view of the transmarine female who is bold enough to venture into the street with her face unveiled. Even the wretched curs stop hostilities for the time, and the sleepy donkey wakes and pricks up his ears at the unusual sight of a human being moving along, enveloped to the waist in a balloon of rustling silk.

While the camels already laden stood quietly gazing at the crowd of spectators, others were kneeling

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on the ground, as they generally do, with that part of the fore legs from the knees downward, doubled up under the body, and those of the hind legs stretched backward, the position in which these animals are usually loaded. Those of Count de B.'s caravan, however, proved particularly obstreperous, and flatly refused to allow anything to be placed on their backs. This obstinacy was caused by their having been idle ever since their arrival in Bagdad, a period of over three months. Almost all camels growl more or less when being loaded. Vicious ones even attempt to bite, sometimes inflicting dangerous wounds. Their teeth are from two to three inches long, always covered with a green or yellowish saliva. I have often seen Arabs seriously hurt by vicious camels. Some camels delight in kicking with their hind legs; though their feet consist only of two very powerful, sinewy toes, without nails, joined together at the bottom by a very thick skin, or foot sole, they have immense strength in their long gaunt legs, and can easily break any man's leg with a single stroke. Luckily, most camels are proverbially good-tempered. When they are made to kneel on the ground to receive their burden, or when they imagine themselves overloaded, their cry is of itself peculiarly awful to the ear of a foreigner, sounding like a medium between the powerful roar of a lion, and the hoarse gurgling laughter of the hyena, a cry expressive of intense agony not easily forgotten, when once heard.

Outside the troop of camels stood four horses, and about eight mules, the former ready saddled and bridled, and destined to carry Count de B., his two interpreters, and his cavass, or armed servant, who all seemed to prefer horses to camels, as far as it was practicable for travelling. The mules were to carry the two

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already described dachterwans, which were ready to receive their future inmates, one of them intended for the two ladies, the other was for the little girl and her two Arab nurses, who were still engaged in taking leave of their relatives and friends. In the meantime the maherries (camel drivers), the mukaries (muleteers), the siddies (negroes), and Bedouins in the service of Count de B., engaged in finishing the loading of the rest of the animals, ran to and fro, and vied with each other in creating as much confusion as possible, by yelling, swearing, and abusing everybody, in the usual Oriental style. Finally, everything was packed, and only awaited the arrival of the horse caravan of Signor P., which was being made ready in the spacious khan, or caravansera, situated inside the town walls. Presently Mustapha, Signor P.'s cavass, the same servant who had accompanied us to Babylon, issued from the city gate, and cantering up to the Count, informed him that Signor P. desired the camel caravan to start, as the horses were too lively and unmanageable to mix with the camels, but that he would overtake him the following day, and then they would travel together. Hereupon the caravan prepared to start, the ladies, child, and nurses took up their quarters in the dachterwans, the Count, his cavass, Ali, his two interpreters, and the Bedouin escort on their horses, the maherries on their camels, the mukaries on the spare mules, every one armed to the teeth, and the caravan was at once in motion. Ali, the faithful cavass of the French Count, was foremost, with half the Bedouin escort, then the camels, next the spare mules, then those carrying the dachterwans, and finally Count de B., with his interpreters and the other half of the Bedouin escort, composing in all about forty persons. They were hardly gone an hour, when our caravan, (as I will henceforth

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call that of Signor P., I having traveled with it all the way from Bagdad to Smyrna, in Asia Minor) issued from the gate of Madem. Foremost came Mustapha, armed to the teeth, mounted on a very restive horse, and sporting a new keffich of lively red and yellow. Behind him came four Bedouin horsemen, in tattered costume, but well mounted and armed with swords, pistols, and tremendously long lances; then came a dozen mules and pack horses, heavily laden with all the necessaries for the long journey, especially with a great quantity of horse gear, such as bridles, halters, knee-caps, water buckets, horse shoes, shackles, etc., driven by the mukaries, also armed and mounted on donkeys. About five hundred yards behind followed the splendid stallions bought by Signor P. for the emperor, twelve of the most perfect animals that Mesopotamia, the cradle and paradise of the equine race, ever produced. It was a splendid sight, this beautiful array of noble horses, each gaily caparisoned, and protected with covers and knee caps, and led by two sturdy Arabs, who, but for the length of the ropes with which they held the animals would often have been lifted entirely from the ground. Never in my life have I seen horses so full of spirit, vigor, and elasticity in all their motions. They would not only stand perfectly erect on their hind legs, but actually walk in this unnatural position for a distance of nearly twenty yards; some almost pitched over on their heads by kicking too high with their hind legs; such extraordinary gymnastics were never seen; yet it was not viciousness, but a mere overflow of health and happiness produced by excellent treatment. They never attempted to bite or kick their grooms. As they moved on prancing, snorting, and neighing lustily, with elastic steps, curved necks, wide open nostrils, and flashing eyes, they presented the very

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picture of equine felicity. Many an old Bedouin among the crowd of spectators frowned, and pulled his beard, even almost wept, as he saw these noble animals leaving their country forever. An experienced blacksmith had been engaged to accompany us all the way to the Mediterranean coast, and was entrusted with the care of the horses' feet, and had received orders to examine them minutely after each day's march. Immediately behind followed Signor P., perfectly happy, and proud of his success. He was mounted on a magnificent horse, and armed with two of Colt's revolvers; by his side rode Father M., the young Belgian priest and missionary, who had been our fellow-traveler first on board the steamer Penang, from Bombay to Bassorah, and then in the river boat Dijeleh, to Bagdad, where he had been staying with the French missionaries of that city, determined to be our traveling companion all the way to Europe. Since the day of his departure from India, he had done away with all the paraphernalia of his clerical profession, and assumed the garb of an ordinary traveler; not being able "to witch the world with noble horsemanship," he secured for himself a rachwan gheddish (a gelding with a peculiar kind of shuffling pace, much used by Persian travelers). To protect himself from marauders, he sported a revolver, with which he meant to do dreadful execution in case of necessity. As to the writer of these pages, who made up the trio of travelers, he bestrode a beautiful chestnut stallion, too young and spirited for a long, steady journey across Mesopotamia; being a passionate lover of sport, I did not omit to take, beside my revolver, an excellent double-barreled gun, and a long hunting knife, expecting to have some exciting sport on the way. Several of our European friends and Arab acquaintances accompanied us for some distance beyond the gates of Bag-

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dad. Immediately behind us rode four more armed horsemen of our Bedouin escort, who brought up the rear. Half way between Bagdad and the Khan of Dsheddeidah, all of our city friends left us, excepting two young countrymen of mine, who determined to accompany us as far as the above mentioned khan, situated on the left bank of the Tigris, about twenty miles due north of Bagdad. Before we had traveled five miles, the sun had disappeared beyond the western horizon, and a short twilight gave place to a beautiful clear, moonlight night, though it was disagreeably sultry; owing to the oppressive atmosphere, and the heavily laden pack horses, the caravan advanced but slowly. My two friends and myself therefore informed Signor P. that, in order not to fall asleep, we would ride ahead of the party, and see if there would be room for both caravans in the Khan of Dsheddeidah. We started at a brisk canter, passing Count de B.'s caravan half an hour after leaving our own, and reaching the khan about ten o'clock, found it quite deserted, neglected, and the courtyard strewed with debris from the walls. After straining our lungs in vain for about a quarter of an hour trying to attract the attention of the lazy khanjee (the man in charge of the khan), we heard a sort of grunt issuing from one of the vaults or stables of the dilapidated building, and on examination found the fellow stretched to his full length on the bare ground, snoring lustily. A good sound shake brought him back to consciousness, whereupon we told him that we wanted food and water for ourselves and horses, and that a whole caravan would arrive before long. He seemed totally indifferent to the news, quietly remarking that he had nothing to eat himself; but as for water there was plenty of it in the river close by. On examination, however, we found the stream at this place lay

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between perpendicular banks, over fifteen feet in height, and quite inaccessible for camels and horses, and there was no bucket or vessel of any kind in the deserted caravansary for carrying water. We were told that there was no other water to be had in the neighborhood, nor a handful of mashed straw nor barley, the usual food for horses all over Arabia and Mesopotamia, nor any human food to be had in the place. Cheerful as was this prospect for hungry, thirsty travelers, we knew too well the character of the natives to allow ourselves to be trifled with in this manner. We therefore handed him three "kerans" (a Persian silver coin current in Bagdad, and worth five Turkish piasters, or about twenty-five cents in American currency), and warned him not to show his face in the kahn again, unless he came with food for us, as well as the horses, under penalty of a sound thrashing. He went out, and woke another Arab, who, as is the custom in Lower Mesopotamia, slept on the flat roof of one of the few little huts, built of sun-dried mud, and roofed with date tree leaves, situated close by, and told him to show us the way to the swamp. Reluctantly and slowly the fellow obeyed, and telling us to follow him with our horses to the water, he led us into a dense thicket of reeds, and brushwood, rendered still more gloomy by the shadows of a cluster of date trees surrounding it, in the centre of which lay a small, but very deep pool, or rather swamp, the water of which could not have been of the best quality, as the horses refused to drink, and soon began to plunge energetically, almost succeeding in pitching us out of our saddles and into the swamp. This was owing chiefly to the mosquitoes, which assailed us furiously on every side, causing us to beat a hasty retreat. Our horses, however, most mysteriously continued kicking and

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plunging all the way to the khan, and it was not before we were about taking off their saddles that we discovered that their legs and lower parts were covered with leeches. In the meantime the khanjee had returned with three rations for the horses, and two watermelons, a little basket of dates, and a quantity of coarse pancake-shaped bread, and a dish of sour milk or "laban," as the natives call it, a great deal more than we expected to get in this wretched place. After feeding our horses, we retired to the flat roof of the building, and attacked the provisions right manfully; after the meal we had a quiet smoke à l'Arabe, and then lay down to sleep with our saddles for pillows unmindful of the clouds of mosquitoes dancing hornpipes on our faces. We had scarcely slept two hours, when the tinkling of numerous bells awoke us, giving notice of the arrival of Count de B.'s caravan, which, however, did not enter our khan, but kept straight on to the next one, called Kibrisli-khan, about fifteen miles distant. We only exchanged a few words with them as they passed, and then lay down again. Hardly half an hour had elapsed, when we were once more roused by the bells of the pack-horses of the second caravan, which hearing that the first had gone on to Kibrisli-khan, and being informed of the inaccessibility of the river, and the scarcity of food, moved on also, I promising Signor P. to overtake him in the morning. We passed the rest of the night quietly, rising before sunrise. After taking a final leave of each other, we started in different directions. My two friends returning to Bagdad, accompanied by the fellow who had piloted us into the swamp the night before, and who was now to serve me as guide. I proceeded due north in order to overtake the caravans at the next khan. Beyond the little village of Dshed-

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deidah the path became very narrow and uneven, being nothing more than a narrow footpath, winding its way through dense clusters of date trees and bushes, and an occasional swamp or ditch, though it is the track traveled over twice each month by the Turkish courier, and the inevitable escort of horsemen, and I could not help wondering if the two caravans had managed to travel by night over this road without any accident. By and by vegetation disappeared altogether, and I found myself on an open barren plain, where I could see at an immense distance eight horsemen moving toward me with the customary quick pace of the Turkish courier, well-known among the Arabs and Persians as "rachwan," a peculiar shuffling gait. This is a very unnatural gait, and horses intended for rachwans have to be broken expressly for this purpose, by being taught to canter with their fore legs, while they trot with their hind legs, which double motion counteracts the shock experienced by the rider in either cantering or trotting, so that even the very poorest equestrian can sit as firmly on a "rachwan" horse as if he were screwed to the saddle. Rachwans properly broken sell at fancy prices, and are generally bought by wealthy, portly and heavy Turks, Persians, and Arabs, anxious to avoid the shaking of their clumsy bodies. It is almost impossible ever to make a ranchwan go at any other pace than this peculiar one, which they seem to prefer. They generally possess great endurance, and will beat almost any other horse in a journey of over a week, as they can keep up the swift shuffling pace all day long without being disturbed. There is no doubt that the râchwân gait has been introduced into Mesopotamia, Syria, and Arabia by the Persians, who seldom ride any other horse; while Bedouins despise them, declaring it to be

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the gait of a donkey, and an insult to their noble race, never break their horses to the pace. In Mesopotamia, Syria, and Arabia they are less in use than in Persia, and no fine, well bred horses are ever broken in for rachwans in those countries. The Boers, or Dutch African farmers are fond of this kind of gait; at least I have seen rachwans in general use among them.

Owing to the excellent qualities of this kind of horse for long journeys, they are generally used by the Turkish couriers or mail riders, who are mostly natives of Tartary or of Koordistan, and their escorts, and it was owing to this fact that I recognized afar off the horsemen moving towards me across the plain as the men in charge of the Turkish Government mail. As they came closer I could distinguish the lances of the escort, and presently came up to them, when one of the escort stopped and begged me to give him some tobacco, which I did, whereupon he informed me that they had passed Kibrisli Khan early before sunrise; that the camel caravan was encamped outside, and the horse caravan inside the building, and that they expected me to arrive by noon. I must here remark that news travels with wonderful swiftness in that part of the world, comparatively speaking, notwithstanding the uncivilized condition of the country. This is owing to the fact that travelers in these countries hardly ever pass each other without stopping their horses for a few minutes, for the purpose of asking each other's destination and starting point, as well as the news of the day. As my guide had to travel on foot, I could not ride fast, and it was therefore 9 A. M., and already pretty hot, when I reached a wretched little Arab village, called Musāba, where I alighted to light my pipe in one of the huts. The inhabitants crowded around my guide and myself, asking him a hundred questions

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about the Feringee (European) he had with him, supposing that I did not understand a word of Arabic. *Apropos* of this, I remember an amusing anecdote told me by a young gentleman still residing in Bagdad. Two or three days after his arrival there from Europe he accompanied another Bagdad friend of mine to the bazaar. While walking through the densely crowded streets of that locality his companion entered into conversation with a native merchant. Not understanding a word of the conversation, my friend amused himself with gazing at the bustle around him, when he was politely accosted by a well-dressed Arab, with a long silvery beard. Not comprehending a syllable, my friend turned to his companion (a long resident) for him to act as interpreter. The latter informed the Arab that his friend could not speak the Arabic language, whereupon the old man, in utter astonishment at this unpardonable ignorance, exclaimed: "Good God! Why every little child in Bagdad understands Arabic." The good people insisted upon selling me fowls, eggs, watermelons, pumpkins, sour milk, etc., which, being on horseback, I of course declined to buy; wh reupon they commenced to bother me, as is customary with nearly all Arabs in Africa and Asia, for bakshesh (a present), for tobacco, etc., when I, well aware that I would never be rid of them if I complied with their requests, resumed my journey. Near the village were several large khans, surrounded by mud walls, almost ten feet in height, overshadowed by stately date trees; a large Persian caravan had been encamped there for the night, and was now busily preparing to pack up and commence their journey. Great numbers of horses, camels, mules, and donkeys were standing in the yards, already equipped. There were evidently a number of females in the caravan, as numer-

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ous dachterwans were visible; though I saw only three or four women, carefully veiled, lounging about the khans; but upon their becoming aware that they were for a moment the objects of my attention, I distinctly heard them utter the words "Giaour!" (a Turkish word meaning a non-Moslem, unbeliever, Christian), and "Kelp!" (an Arabic word, meaning a dog, a cur), expressions freely used by all Moslems upon us Christians, and expressly uttered by the irate women in both languages of the country to insure their being understood by me. I quietly rode on, and perceived about three miles ahead of me the large khan, where the two caravans were encamped, on a slight elevation of the barren plain, in which Musāba figured like a green oasis in the desert. The sun burned fearfully; not a breath fanned the weary traveler, and the barrels of the gun across my shoulder became so heated that I dared not touch them with my bare hands. Fortunately another half hour's ride brought me to the khan. On arriving at the slight elevation of ground on which the building was situated, I perceived at the foot of the other side of the hill, close by a little brook, the snow white tents of Count de B.'s caravan, the camels and mules feeding on the scanty grass along the borders of the brook, near the water. All the persons of the caravan seemed to be also overpowered by the oppressive heat, and were asleep in their respective tents, with the exception of two of the "Aghēls," or Bedouin escort, who watched the camp and animals, and joyously hailed my arrival.

At the entrance of the khan, I was met by Mustapha; who had spied me when I was still far away on the plain. He took charge of my horse, telling me that the building was only occupied by our own caravan, and that everything was fast asleep. I found the

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twelve horses securely picketed in the shady vaulted corridor along the walls, while the beasts of burden stood with drooping, drowsy heads, huddled up in the shady corners in the khan. In the vicinity of the baggage stowed away in a corner near the horses, stretched at full length, and stripped of almost every stitch of clothing, the dusky forms of the sais, or grooms, mukarries, mule and pack horse drivers, and Aghels totally regardless of fleas, mosquitoes, and sand-flies, which agreeable insects abound in all caravan serais. Entering a dark but lofty apartment, directly opposite the corridor, where the horses were picketed, I found lying on blankets on the ground, and apparently fast asleep, Signor P., Father M., and Bahri (an Abyssinian negro girl), about fifteen years old, whom I forgot to mention, as forming part of our caravan, on leaving Bagdad. This girl made the long journey with us from Bagdad to the shores of the Mediterranean on the back of a white donkey, and, though in poor health then, performed in half European, half Asiatic male attire, the long, difficult, and fatiguing journey on one and the same donkey, sharing voluntarily, and cheerfully all the toils, privations, and dangers of the expedition with truly wonderful energy and perseverance. Her biograpy is somewhat romantic, and may not be uninteresting to some of my readers. When a girl of but ten or eleven years, she lived with her parents in a large village situated on the beautiful banks of a river (the name of which she could not tell) in Southern Abyssinia. The tribe lived very happily, as they had plenty of cattle, and the fertile soil yielded vegetable food in abundance. One day towards evening, she went out with her aged mother (who seems to have had many more children than Bahri, whose real name seems to have been "Mahura"), in search of a

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strayed goat, the pursuit of which led them about two miles from the village. While rambling quietly through the grass, they were startled by the sudden appearance of a big, powerful man who had been lying concealed in the grass, or low shrubbery. This fellow rushed towards the two helpless creatures and attempted to seize the child; but the mother suspecting his intentions, and noticing some people belonging to the tribe at work in the fields some distance off, gave the alarm, tenaciously clinging to the child; upon which the dusky slave hunter, for such he was, drew a dagger, and stabbed the helpless mother to the heart. He then gagged the crying child, flung a blanket over her head, carried her to a neighboring bush, where his horse was concealed, and before the people in the field could interfere had disappeared.

Overcome with terror, and almost suffocated with the gag in her mouth, and the blanket over her face, the poor child lost consciousness, and for a time was dead to all knowledge of her misery. On regaining her senses she found herself still in the arms of her captor, whose horse was going at full speed. Toward morning they came to a halt, the horseman dismounted, and carried his captive into a large hut surrounded by a high and almost impenetrable thicket. When the blanket was removed from her face, she found herself in the presence of over twenty girls and young women of all ages, from six to sixteen, all well secured with slight iron shackles round their ankles, and carefully guarded by two or three well armed ruffians squatted down on a straw mat at the entrance to the hut. Many of the poor captives were perfectly naked, and all looked very wretched. Not a word was uttered, however, except by the ruffians themselves, who used to lash the prisoners brutally on the slightest attempt at speaking,

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crying, or escaping. Mahura was of course, treated like her sisters in misfortune, whom she discovered were not all of her tribe, but had been stolen from different localities. When they numbered about sixty the shackles were removed, the captives were fettered in couples at the wrists, allowing them to separate about four feet from each other; each one over ten years of age was obliged to carry a bag of "durrah" (Egyptian millet, a kind of round corn common in Northeastern Africa and Western Asia), which weighed from ten to thirty pounds, according to the strength of the bearer, and contained the captives' food for the journey to the seacoast. The camels that were to carry the slave hunters, and the necessary supply of water, started for the shores of the Red Sea, the human spoil driven before them. After a journey of two or three months, during which the poor creatures suffered terribly, the numbers were sadly diminished, The greater part of the journey led across barren and scarcely inhabited districts. Almost daily, one or more of the hapless wretches dropped on the way, never to rise again, and were left like cattle to die where they fell. Of fifty-six captives, but eighteen reached the Bay of Tajurrah, a little seaport notorious for its slave trade, and distant about one hundred and fifty miles due south of the strait of Bab el Mandeb, on the African shore. There they were fed and fattened for about two months to get them in good condition, and afterwards sold to an Arab slave dealer, despatched on board a bagalow, transferred to the Arabian coast, and landed in Muscat.

Owing to the many British cruisers continually scouring these waters, but, especially those of the Persian Gulf in which they have caught many trader, slavers sailing along the coast of Arabia, always keep close to the shore, in order to give a chance of escape

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to themselves, if not to their living freight, in case of their being chased by a British cruiser. They usually sail only at night, remaining carefully hidden during the day in the inlets and creeks so numerous along the coast, where the water is generally so shallow that cruisers cannot approach closely. In Muscat some of the slaves were sold, and the rest sent by caravan along the seashore of the arid provinces of Oman and El Hassa, or El Hadjer to Bassorah, which awful journey the poor creatures had to perform on foot. In Bassorah they were all disposed of at prices ranging from one thousand to two thousand Turkish piasters (forty dollars to four hundred and fifty American currency), according to their age and condition. Mahura was bought for two thousand piasters (ninety dollars American gold) by an old Turkish merchant, who kept her but a short time owing to her poor health, apparently shattered forever by her dreadful sufferings on the long journey, which lasted over a year. He, therefore, sent her as a present to his brother, a wealthy horse dealer in Bagdad, and head of a large family, where in the course of time she learned to talk Turkish and Arabic; but entirely forgot her native language. During Signor P.'s visit in Bagdad, he often had occasion to be at the house of her master, with whom he had dealings in horse flesh, and frequently saw the poor negro girl; struck with the superiority of her intellectual qualities compared with those of other women of her race, he resolved to buy her, if possible. The owner of Bahri, (for such was the Arabic name given to the girl in exchange for her native one of Mahura,) had a short time after the return of Signor P. from the desert evinced a great fancy for one of the horses of the latter, a most beautiful animal. The experienced eye of the Italian veterinary surgeon, however, soon detected that

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beautiful creature was not sound, so he consented to part with it for a fair price; the horse was bought from the Bedouins for six thousand Turkish piasters. Signor P. asked nine thousand for it, but finally consented to take six thousand in cash and the girl Bahri for the horse, to which the wily Moslem gladly consented, confident that before a week had elapsed, the slave girl, secretly encouraged by his promise of liberal presents if she would run away from Signor P., the giaour (unbeliever), and take refuge in her master's house, where it would be easy for him to stow her away in some place of concealment, until the Italian should be gone forever from Bagdad. In this well-planned speculation, however, the good Moslem was mistaken, for Bahri who received her liberty from Signor P. the very day the caravan started from Bagdad, and was consequently free to go where she pleased, soon found that the Christian treated her not as a slave, but almost as a child of his own; so she did not only return to the knavish horse-dealer, but actually prostrated herself before Signor P., placed his foot upon her neck as a token of the most abject submission and respect, and entreating him with heart-rendering lamentations, and a profusion of tears, not to abandon her like a leprous cur in the streets of Bagdad; but to take pity on her, and rather kill her at once than refuse her only wish to be his slave, and as such to follow his footsteps wherever he went. She fervently added that if hereafter he might deem her worthy of so great a favor, he would allow her to become a Christian and be baptized, and honored with the name of Maria, a name she greatly cherished, as she said she had often been shown where on the flat roof of the Turkish residence a picture of a beautiful and good-hearted Christian woman of that name (evidently a

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picture of the Virgin), by an Armenian girl of her own age across the street. This, owing to the extreme narrowness of the eastern streets, would be an easy matter; but Bahri would have been severely punished by the Turk, if she had been caught conversing with an unbeliever while in his house. In vain were all the remonstrances of Signor P. that a distance of at least fifteen hundred miles lay between Bagdad and Smyrna (Asia Minor), where his family lived, and that in her weak physical condition, she would never be able to bear the fatigue and privations of the long journey, but would assuredly die before he reached Diarbekir (the capital of Koordistan). She, however, replied that, as a frail little girl of ten years, she had been torn from all that was dear to her, and had to perform the dreadful journey from the interior of Abyssinia to Bagdad, mostly on foot and under horrible treatment, and that Allah had not let her die, though she had often longed for death while in the hands of the slaves, and that now she felt confident of being able to perform, as a young woman, the comparatively easy journey to the country of the Nazranee—the Arabic expression for Christian, derived from Nazareth. But even in case she should be doomed to die on the road, she wished to die near her master, and if possible a Christian. Against such painful entreaties surely no human heart could be proof, and Signor P. consented reluctantly to take her with him, as he felt certain the journey would kill her. He expressed the wish, however, that she would postpone her baptism until their arrival at Smyrna, so that his two young daughters about her age, might share in the holy rite. To this, of course, she joyfully assented. Father M., the young Roman Catholic priest and missionary, a member of our caravan, promised that if she should die on the road, he would

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baptize her in "extremis" (in the last moments), for which offer she thanked him with tears in her eyes.

On entering the dark apartment of Kibrisli Khan, I found them all apparently fast asleep, and their faces covered with handkerchiefs, to protect them from the myriads of flies and sand-flies which infested the khan, and whose number was really appalling; but this covering, light as it was, was hardly bearable, as the heat of the day even in this vaulted room was almost suffocating. Hearing my voice, they all pulled off their impromptu veils. Signor P. and Father M. rose promptly, and welcomed me cordially; but Bahri, as I will continue to call her, was too weak to stand; the fatigue of the whole night's journey had proved too much for her; besides this an attack of fever began to manifest itself in her frail body. Though she only complained of being very tired, the keen eye of Signor P. detected the real state of things, and he proceeded at once to administer the proper remedies out of the little medicine chest he carried with him; but in spite of these the poor girl grew worse as evening approached, so that the idea of resuming the journey that night had to be given up. Count de B.'s caravan, however, as soon as the heat of the day was over, struck their tents and started for Delhi Abbas, twenty-eight miles further on. As circumstances would have it, we did not see this caravan again until we arrived at Mopul, for Bahri was still worse during the night, and the following day she was so ill that Signor P. believed her to be beyond all hopes, and judging it wrong to detain the caravan longer was towards evening about making arrangements either for her return to Bagdad, or for her burial, when a sudden change took place in the condition of the patient. The fever disappeared, her thirst abated, her appetite returned and by four

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o'clock she was strong enough to walk about the khan. The setting sun disappeared in fiery grandeur behind the western horizon, and a delightfully cool and refreshing breeze fortunately sprung up after sunset. Bahri declared herself well enough to resume the journey, and an hour after nightfall found our whole caravan on the way to Delhi Abbas, Bahri on her white donkey, with a man on foot on each side of her, to keep her from falling, in case her strength should give way. This however was scarcely necessary, for the girl gained strength from the very moment the fever disappeared. She grew stronger every day, and performed the rest of the long and tedious journey to the Mediterranean, as well as any of us, winning the favor of even the Arabs of our caravan; though Arabs as a rule have a great contempt for negroes. The country over which we traveled was perfectly level, and the ground very smooth, and so barren that even a goat would have been at a loss where to find a single mouthful of vegetable matter, or a drink of water on the endless plain, which is nothing less than the northwestern part of the vast Loorian desert previously described. Through the night no sound was heard in that seemingly God-forsaken territory, but the tinkling of the bells of our pack-horses, the occasional humming of a monotonous Arab melody, as if the singer were trying to keep himself awake, and once or twice we heard the shrill cry kee-huee, kee-huee produced by a medium sized bird, a kind of desert plover, whose means of subsistence is a puzzle to me, unless it lives on hope and moonshine, which seem to be the only thing in which it can indulge on that desolate plain. After midnight the pace of our pack-horses, which were all heavily laden, began to slacken a little, and about the same time, the moon which had hitherto illuminated the ground over

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which we had traveled disappeared behind a sort of haze in the sky. Signor P. with the canvass, one-half of the Bedouin escort, and the horses, by degrees got about five hundred yards ahead of me. I escorted the pack-horses, in company with Father M., Bahri, and the other half of the Bedouin escort, so we jogged on quite unsuspectingly. After awhile it struck me that I did not hear anything of the party ahead, and consequently I pressed the drowsy mukries most energetically to urge on their pack-horses. Now we went over the ground quite rapidly, and ought to have overtaken the others in a very short time; but strange to say we did not, yet it was sufficiently clear for us to see that we had not lost our path. So we concluded that Signor P. could no longer be ahead of us. In this perplexity I thought it best to stop my division, and let everybody listen if they could hear anything of our missing companions; but no sound of any kind could be heard, not even the weird call of the solitary desert plover. I therefore thought it would be advisable to fire a shot in the air, and wait for an answer. I fired, and all looked anxiously out into the darkness, eagerly waiting for a response, when about two minutes after a flash of fire, a loud report, and a bullet whizzing over our heads made us aware of our whereabouts. We found that we were nearly half a mile from the others, who had deviated to the right, and were considerably behind us. We therefore moved briskly, retracing our steps towards them, and soon heard the tramp of their horses; when we met, the matter was readily explained. The road divided into two branches; they had taken the right, and we the left branch; neither party was wrong, however, as both paths would have led to the same place after all, only ours would have led us for about two miles over rougher ground. We thought it

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prudent to keep close together in future, as it is very unpleasant to lose one's way in a country destitute of both food and water.

In order that my readers may fully understand the slow progress that our caravan made, I have to state that before starting from Bagdad, it had been agreed between Signor P. and the men in charge of the stallions bought by the former, that the latter should perform the whole journey from Bagdad to the Mediterranean on foot; each man leading the horse in his charge all the way by means of a rope attached to the head-stall of the animal, and that they should only be allowed to mount the horses when crossing the river. This precaution was taken by Signor P. to prevent the possibility of the horses getting sore backs during the journey; besides, if everybody was mounted, the heavily laden mules and packhorses could not have kept pace with the main body of our caravan, which it was absolutely necessary they should do. The consequence was that our average rate of traveling from Bagdad to the Mediterranean hardly ever exceeded three miles an hour, the usual rate of a person traveling on foot; as may be presumed this slow progress was often far more fatiguing to those on horseback than to those on foot, as it produced intense drowsiness; the more so, that we had not slept properly since we left Bagdad; quite refreshing rest being out of the question, owing to the terrible heat and the myriad of troublesome insects, especially sand flies, which infest the khans or caravanserais, and instantly torture the poor traveler, particularly if he is an European and not accustomed to such rough treatment. Toward morning, and just about daybreak, we crossed a canal which runs in a direction from east to west, leading part by the waters of the river Diyālah in to the Tigris. Owing to the neg-

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lected state of the old canal, which was about fifty feet wide and rather shallow, we experienced considerable difficulty in fording it, as our horses sank up to their knees in the soft mud. The noise produced by our caravan wading through the water roused the dogs of a little village, as yet invisible on the opposite bank, and a short distance to the right of the ford. Everything in the village then seemed buried in the deepest slumber, with the exception of the dogs, who challenged us furiously, and a couple of chanticleers who, anxious to augment the noise, gave forth their universally known vociferous morning call. We left the village undisturbed and following the path which, after crossing the canal, led along it for a considerable distance, we soon discovered the gray walls of the khan of Delhi Abbas, situated close by the spot where the canal receives its waters from the river Diyālah, within two hundred yards of a high roughly constructed stone bridge across the river, which is about fifty yards wide at this place and very deep in the middle. No sooner had the shades of night been chased from the firmament by the rising sun, then we percieved at a distance of about four miles in a due northwesterly direction, the low dark-brown and black tents of the largest Bedouin camp I ever saw, which would have looked intensely gloomy, but for the thousands of swarthy human figures moving to and fro in all directions; while the vast plain to the north, east and west of the camp for miles and miles, was literally covered with incredible numbers of camels, horses, sheep and goats by far outnumbering any herd of cattle I have ever seen. Of camels there could scarcely have been less than fifty thousand, the horses must have numbered at least ten thousand, donkeys and cattle also by the thousands, while the sheep and goats were literally in-

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numerable. It was a grand sight and indelibly imprinted on my memory, leaving with me the impression of a mammoth colony of ants, compared to which the inhabitants of a gigantic anthill, the height of a two story house, I one day happened to see while hunting on the banks of the Orange river in South Africa, appeared to me to dwindle into a mere nothing.

Approaching the khan, we passed a small cluster of mud huts, the inhabitants of which, men and boys, were almost naked; the women were dressed in long, dark red woolen shirts. All scanned us with intense curiosity as we passed, loudly praising our beautiful horses, and smilingly doubting the pretended sex of a slender and delicate, but dusky human being (the girl Bahri), dressed in European male attire, and a tarbush or red woolen Turkish scull-cap with a black tassel, who gallantly bestrode a beautiful snow-white donkey, and rode beside us with imperturbable *sang froid.* Inquiring of these people we learned that the chaos on the plain was caused by the temporary encampment of a powerful tribe of Shammr Bedouins, under Sheik Forchan, an old, but influential chief, the reputed leader of twenty thousand Bedouins. We reached the khan just at sunrise, and entered it as soon as Mustapha, our cavass, had created a little order in the building, which sheltered about twenty Persians, bound for Bagdad, they having been gruffly addressed by Mustapha, and driven from the shady side of the courtyard with their luggage and horses, attempted to remonstrate; but the cavass haughtily silenced them, showing a Turkish passport signed by Namyk Pasha himself, which had a wonderful effect, silencing them instantaneously. When we entered the khan, our horses, noticing the twenty ugly, thick necked, big headed Persian rachwans standing lazily in a corner of the

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building, struck up a boisterous neighing, plunging and kicking, as if they were just out of the stable instead of having made a thirty miles' journey. Unloading the mules and pack-horses, picketing the stallions and feeding all our animals, was the work of not more than twenty minutes, as our men were very hungry themselves, and therefore went through their work with unusual dispatch. Mustapha posted himself at the gate, where he kept at bay a crowd of ragged men, women and children, who were attempting to gain admittance, partly from curiosity, and partly for the purpose of selling to the newcomers provisions in the form of sheep, kids, fowls, butter, milk, eggs, melons, etc. It was not long before they began to do a brisk business with our hungry men and with Yussef, our American cook, and his assistant, Hadjee Ahmed (the "h" in Ahmed is gutteral, like the "ch" in the Scotch word loch), who filled the double office of cook's assistant and paymaster of the men till we reached Mossul, where Signor P. relieved him of the latter office, having detected him appropriating to his own use what belonged to others. A sumptuous breakfast, with a liberal allowance of claret and "rake" (arrack), soon set our inner man all right, and we retired to rest; but the flies, fleas, sandflies, and the dust raised by so many horses in their futile efforts to free themselves from their tormentors, were unbearable, and made sleep an impossibility. Hardly knowing what to do with ourselves till sunset, Signor P. and myself applied to our usual solace, tobacco, and repaired to the entrance of the khan, through the open doorway of which a gentle breeze was blowing, making it the coolest spot in the whole building. Poor Padre M., evidently anticipating a second edition of our torture the previous day by the pestilent insects previously mentioned, was deter-

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mined not to suffer this time, and had, therefore, so cordially patronized the bottle, that he soon fell asleep and snored most vigorously, totally regardless of consequences, till towards evening, when he awoke with his face and hands so fearfully marked by the attacks of the sandflies, that he looked as if he had the measles. In the meantime, Signor P., Mustapha and myself viewed the immense masses of camels, horses, sheep, goats, etc., slowly winding their way to the river to drink, accompanied by hundreds of Bedouins of both sexes. As they advanced we could see that most of the men were provided with small leather buckets, in which to carry the water from the river, as the banks were too steep and stony to allow any animals but the sheep and the goats to descend to the water's edge, but the natives had constructed a series of large troughs of sun-dried bricks and clay on the banks, about three hundred yards from each other. As soon as they arrived at these troughs, some of the Bedouins turned to with a will to fill them with water, placing themselves in a line down to the brink of the river, and passing the buckets from one to the other as our firemen do, while others endeavoured by means of long sticks and whips, and with unearthly yells, to prevent the overcrowding of the troughs, or the squeezing to death of the baby camels, calves, fillies, etc., of which there were a number in all stages of their infancy, liable to come to grief in the universal rush for water. The horses and cows, which were carefully kept apart from each other, were driven to troughs for their especial use, as they are more particular about their food and drink than camels; beside this, the camels have a peculiar, strong smelling perspiration, particularly noticeable when they are congregated in large numbers, which perfume is not much relished by the keen-scented horses and cows, both of which

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animals will refuse to drink out of a vessel that has been used by a camel.

Having, like Signor P., since my arrival in Arabia, made the characteristics of the Arabian horse a study, and having, from early youth, had a passion for horse flesh, the congregation of such vast numbers of these animals, in a sort of semi-savage state, offered a fine field for study to myself and to Signor P., who was anxious to purchase a few more stallions. We therefore repaired to the place where the horses were watered, and passed them in review.

As we expected, they were all mares, accompanied by their offspring, from the struggling filly of one week old, up to the mischievous colt of eighteen months; (full grown stallions are ridden down to the water by the Bedouin youngsters, after the others have withdrawn.) There was a great variety of color among these horses, represented numerically in the following order: iron gray, light slate color, chestnut, dark brown, flea-bitten (white sprinkled with little black or brown spots), bay, white, black, and cream colored. Iron-gray is the color most frequently met with in Arabian horses, while black ones are exceedingly rare throughout the country, and a glossy black is seldom if ever found, as the horses are never stabled, seldom groomed properly, and are exposed all the year round to the rays of the sun, deadening the lustre of the coat, which can only be made glossy by careful grooming and confinement in a stable. Still more rare, I might almost call it a wonder, is the sight of a thorough-bred Arabian horse of a cream color, or as the French call it couleur Isabelle. Not only are they scarce, but those to be met with are of a mixed blood, or bad stock, contemptuously called by the Arabs "gheddish," a worthless,—a pack-horse, a gelding, and they assert

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that it is almost impossible to find a horse of this color that is of pure Arab blood. Signor P., in forty years' residence and travels through all parts of Arabia, Mesopotamia, Syria, Egypt, and North Africa, only met with one, and bought it for H. M. Victor Emanuel, King of Italy, who by the way owns the finest Arabian horses in all Europe, and is such an enthusiast in horse-flesh that he is said to pass more time in his stable, than in his cabinet. Most Moslems, especially the Turks, are particulary superstitious regarding the color, and marks of a horse, while a dark horse, with a white star, or narrow white stripe on its forehead, with one, or three white feet, is readily bought by them, at even more than its value. They will obstinately refuse to buy, and will even give a wide berth to a dark horse destitute of white hair, either on its forehead or feet, or furnished with too much white on the forehead, with a white nose, with two or four white feet, or with a large white, or other abnormous spot on some other part of its body, as they consider these marks bad omens, and sure to prove fatal in one way or another to the owner. Owing to this foolish predjudice, a Turkish cavalry officer of Hillah was exceedingly glad to sell me a most beautiful young horse that I rode on our departure from Bagdad, for a mere trifle, simply because it had the misfortune (or good luck for me) to have been born with a spot of white hair, about the size of a lady's hand, on the left haunch. But for this the animal could not have been purchased from him at any price. A better, more intelligent steed, a more courageous and reliable hunter never walked on four legs. My affection for the noble animal afterwards became so strong that among all the reminiscences of my sojourn in the Mesopotamia those of my faithful Felix, as I called him, will be among the last to escape memory.

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From shortly after sunrise till near sunset, one large herd of camels, horses, sheep and goats, one after the other, moved to and fro from the river without interruption; but though during that time over two thousand horses passed in view before us, Signor P. did not succeed in making a purchase, as by far the greater part were mares, colts and fillies, and he had strict orders to buy only stallions of a bay or black color, of which the Bedouins had none equal to those already in his possession. The Shammr Bedouins, though extensive horse breeders, are not so famous for their animals as the Aneize or the Montefik Bedouins; but their camels are considered the finest in Mesopotamia. Their sheep are all of the original Arabian breed, called in some parts of the world "the fat-tailed or broad-tailed sheep," owing to the remarkable development of their caudal appendages, consisting merely of the vertebræ of the tail, surrounded by an extraordinary lump of pure spongy fat, which in a well-grown healthy sheep attains the weight of from twenty to fifty pounds. This ponderous tail gives the animal a curious, clumsy, waddling appearance, especially in walking or running, when the ponderous tail dangles heavily to the right and left, not unlike a bag of sand hanging from its haunches. Even at their birth, the young lambs show a considerable accumulation of fat in that poriton of their body, which steadily increases with age and size, provided of course that the animal is in good health. This peculiar construction seems to have the effect of draining all the fat of the body into the hind quarters of the animal, as the head, neck and chest of this kind of sheep are almost invariably destitute of greasy matter, and look strangely lean compared with the rest of its body. The fat of the tail when melted does not taste in the least tallowy, but somewhat like fresh but-

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ter, forming a capital substitute for it. Owing to this unequal distribution of fat the meat is inferior to our mutton, but is quite palatable. All the sheep in Arabia, Mesopotamia, Syria, Egypt, Southern Persia and Koordistan are of this breed. They are also to be found in China, India, North and South Africa, in which countries the shepherds sometimes attach a small carriage or a board to the hind quarters of those sheep which have usually heavy tails, and deposit the caudal appendage upon it in order to prevent it from dragging on the ground. The fat-tailed sheep is smaller and slighter built than ours, ears much longer and broader, and its wool is usually shorter and softer than that of our sheep of equal growth. The Arabian goat on the contrary is much taller and more slender built than ours, has also much broader and longer ears, and has hair from four to fourteen inches in length; part of it is exported, part is manufactured into tent cloth, bagging, head stalls, carpets, ropes, etc., by the native women. The Arabin sheep and goat give less milk than those of Europe and of an inferior quality.

Toward sunset the ground in front of the large khan, but a short time before alive with people and animals, resumed its quiet, undisturbed appearance, inducing us to enjoy the luxury of a bath in the refreshing, transparent waters of the Diyālah. Two hours after sunset saw our caravan again, hale and hearty, *en route* for Karatepi, a village about thirty-two miles due north of Delhi Abbas. The moon rose above the horizon in silent majesty, illuminating the smooth sandy plain so effectually, that even at the distance of twelve miles we could easily discern the bold outlines of Dshebl Narin, Tebl Narin, or Mount Narin, a branch of the still higher Dshebl Hamrin, a long, low mountain range, traversing from northwest to southeast the vast

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plain between the rivers Tigris and Diyālah. Owing to its exceedingly barren condition, the country over which we traveled was entirely uninhabited, except by gazelles, of which we saw more in this district than at any time since we left Bagdad; though the beautifully smooth and level ground almost seemed to solicit a chase then, we did not deem it prudent to do so, as our horses required all their strength for the journey. The country lying between Delhi Abbas and Kiffri, a small town north of Karatepi, is notorious throughout Mesopotamia for its insecurity, its inhabitants, almost without exception, being professional thieves, highwaymen and marauders, living upon the proceeds of their lawless deeds. A few years ago this part of the country was so unsafe for travelers that nobody except the Turkish Government Overland Post, protected by a very strong escort of regular cavalry, ventured to take this road; and even now the mail rider, if not provided with a sufficient escort, is occasionally attacked and plundered. Solitary travelers or stragglers from caravans are often murdered. To put a stop to these crimes and encourage travelers to patronize the Imperial Post, the Sultan issued a firman, according to which the governors of the respective provinces have to answer for all loss of life and property sustained by all travelers attacked and robbed within the Ottoman Empire while under the protection of a government escort. In return the governor holds the inhabitants of the town or village nearest to which the robbery was committed responsible for the immediate delivery of the criminals to the authorities for punishment, or else the full indemnification of the sufferers by the robbery, including government expenses, in the shape of money, produce, or extra recruits for the army. As may be expected, this law, though rather despotic in its character, soon

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proved to be wonderfully effective, and is very creditable to the man whose brain devised it, whoever he may be. Traveling, either by Imperial post, if in small numbers, or in large caravans, became the order of the day. Robbery and murder, till lately of frequent occurrence, suddenly became wonderfully scarce in many parts of the Ottoman Empire. But though law greatly reduced highway robbery in the districts north of Bagdad, it did not succeed in rendering travel through them entirely safe. This is owing to their vicinity to the Persian frontier, thirty miles from Karatepi, and twenty-five from Kiffri, where, of course, Ottoman power ceases. Both sides of the frontier are inhabited by a wild, fanatical, rapacious population, of half Turcoman, half Persian extraction. The men, a filthy, lazy, ruffianly set of vagabonds, generally well-mounted and to all appearances well-organized and trained to their nefarious calling, turn out and pursue the Ottoman subjects into Persian territory, the Persians into Ottoman jurisdiction, commit there robberies and occasionally murders. Immediately after the commission of which crimes they retreat in hot haste across the frontier to their own country; thereby rendering it almost impossible to overtake and bring them to justice. Almost all the highway robberies committed in that part of the Ottoman empire since the above law was enforced have been by these Persian "border ruffians."

Perfectly conscious of the insecurity of the road, we resolved to keep a good look out all night, and traveled in a close, compact body, not permitting anybody to loiter behind. About midnight we arrived at the foot of Dshebl-Narin, a barren ridge of hills, over which our path led. Owing to the beautifully clear moonlight, we traveled it with comparative ease; though the north side of the hill was quite rugged and steep, it was not

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sufficient to overcome the drowsiness which tormented us night after night more and more, especially from about 1 to 3 A.M., when we always suffered terribly from sleepiness and inflamed eyes.

Notwithstanding the insecurity of the road and the danger of falling from our horses, our most strenuous efforts to keep our eyes open finally proved futile; talking, singing, smoking, taking snuff, drinking arak (a kind of strong brandy, distilled from dates, tasting somewhat like absynthe and like that assuming a milky color when diluted with water), chewing gunpowder, bathing forehead and temples with arak, biting our lips, and pinching our ears till we drew blood—all this was of no avail—nature insisted on having her due, and our eyes *would* close in spite of our desperate resistance. Finally Father M. lost his equilibrium and fell from his horse, severely bruising his right arm and shoulder; about half an hour later poor Bahri lost her balance while asleep on her donkey and rolled down a small embankment, luckily without much injury to herself. The excitement caused by these two accidents somewhat roused us from our lethargy and gave us strength to keep awake the rest of the night; but I shall never forget the torture we experienced in our efforts to keep our inflamed and bloodshot eyes open. Though the moon shone brightly, our overstrained eyesight made us feel as if we were traveling through Egyptian darkness, which would not allow us to see each other's forms distinctly even at the short distance of three yards, and often caused us to bring our horses' heads into dangerous proximity to the heels of those preceding. Luckily our animals did not appear to suffer like their masters, who wisely abandoned their bridles, leaving the horses to choose the track for themselves, which they did with wonderful sagacity, never once deviating from the right

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course, and quietly following in Indian file the stallions led by our Arabs, who, accustomed to flies and fleas, having slept at every halt, did not feel any of the torture we experienced. In addition to a deafening ringing noise in my ears, as if produced by thousands of little bells, I was continually tormented by appalling visions, a gigantic palace, for instance, of magnificent structure and illuminated by a thousand lights, suddenly rose majestically before me; to my utter astonishment, before I could pull my bridle, my horse walked directly through its splendid walls, without the slightest difficulty, only to carry me soon after in front of a massive stone wall, toward which we approached so rapidly that I was sure my horse would be crushed against it in another moment. To save my life, I was just about vaulting from the saddle, leaving my obstinate steed to go by itself, when, lo! through the immense blocks of granite we slipped without coming in contact with anything. On we jogged, when suddenly the ground became softer and softer. Already my poor horse was up to its chest in mud; still it pushed on, scaring thousands of blistered toads, ghastly lizards, horrid snakes and bats, which hurriedly escaped to the right and left as we advanced. Up to its neck my horse sank; still it pushed gallantly through the mire, splashing it on all sides, making prodigious efforts to extricate itself; soon the poor animal disappeared altogether from the surface, my shoulders were submerged, then my mouth—a shriek of despair, and I was gone! that is to say, I traveled for some time underground, with the perspiration of agony pouring down my face, till I suddenly felt myself clutched by some demon who severed my arm from behind. Just as I was about to settle him with my revolver, the familiar cry "qu'-est-ce qu'il y-a?" (what is the matter?) of Signor P., who had been attracted by

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my shriek, brought me back to reality, to my intense satisfaction. But half an hour had scarcely elapsed, when I was again traveling alone in some queer territory where suddenly I found myself in an impenetrable thicket of gigantic cacti and other plants furnished with thorns two feet long; from their recesses crawled horrid spiders of at least fifty pounds' weight, hairy caterpillars fully ten feet long, and other charming little insects of corresponding size, staring at me with villainous green eyes, but not daring to touch me. My horse stalked through these thorny plants as if walking through a clover field, and we continued our journey unhurt till we reached a green meadow where we were surrounded by thousands of hump-backed dwarfs with ugly faces and mischievous eyes, who cheered vociferously on my approach, grinning at me, jumping into the air and going through a series of somersaults, whistling and hooting like madmen. Not satisfied with this, they laid hold of my poor horse's tail and tried to stop him, till I lost my temper and, applying my spurs, he lashed out in spite of his sorry half-starved appearance and swollen legs, with such tremendous effect that about twenty of the rascally humpbacks were sent flying into the air as if they had been sitting on an exploding barrel of gunpowder. The other dwarfs now lost their temper, and yelling—"Stop him, stop him!" assailed me on all sides with sticks and stones; but, Don Quixote like, I dug my spurs into Rosinante, dashed through the crowd, and took to flight, hotly pursued by the little urchins, when, Heavens! I suddenly found myself at the brink of a yawning perpendicular abyss, several hundred feet in depth, with a roaring torrent at the bottom. Giving my bridle a tremendous pull I tried to stop my horse, but it was too late. Down, down, I fancied my horse and myself went

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into the abyss. In dreadful agony I closed my eyes, expecting every moment to be dashed to atoms. After awhile, astonished to find myself still alive, I ventured to open my eyes, only to see the raging torrent once more still hundreds of feet below me at the bottom of the precipice, and my horse, instead of lying on the rocks below or in the foaming whirlpool, coolly striding in the air, carrying me safely across the abyss, which delighted me so much that my spurs involuntarily came in contact with the sides of my real charger, causing him to make a sudden plunge toward that of Signor P., throwing him nearly out of his saddle. Those who have ever been troubled with nightmare when asleep in their beds, and know what a dreadful feeling it produces, can imagine how much more dreadful it must be when experienced while traveling through the desert on horseback, with eyes open, indeed, but inflamed, bloodshot and intensely painful, and almost blind from sheer want of sleep. It is, in my opinion, the greatest agony a man in perfect health of body and mind can be called to suffer.

This torture was resorted to as one of the last resources of the demons of the Spanish Inquisition to elicit a confession from a prisoner. The obstinate victim was deprived of his sleep by professional torturers, whose duty it was to prevent the wretched being under their care from losing his sense of suffering by all possible means. They regularly relieved each other at intervals, till finally the lethargy became so intense that they were obliged to resort to the most horrid means, tickling the soles of the feet, pricking with needles, crushing the victim's fingers, and burning with a hot iron, till the poor wretch, in despair, either made the desired confession, or was released by death, or incurable insanity. Though I had only been four days and nights, say about one

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hundred hours without any sleep at all, I suffered the above described agony in consequence, and I do not think that any human being can live with sound mind and body through an ordeal of two hundred consecutive hours without sleep.

Father M., Bahri and myself were not the only ones in the caravan subjected to the above ordeal. Signor P., himself, an old and experienced traveler, suffered greatly from the same cause, and more than once during the journey that night suddenly shouted his orders for the caravan to stop, to save us from falling into imaginary rivers and swamps and over precipices. Toward daybreak the dreadful lethargy disappeared; but we only began to feel cheered when we caught sight of a small forest, luxuriant with dark green foliage, immediately behind which was the little town of Karatepi, snugly ensconced, and where we arrived soon after sunrise. The appearance of our caravan created considerable excitement among the inhabitants, who sallied out to meet us laden with milk, eggs, fowls, and whatever they could muster from their scanty resources of animal and vegetable food, hoping to prevail upon us to trade. We were too fatigued however to notice them, and anxious to procure rest passed straight through the crowd of dirty sore-eyed natives to the khan, which we luckily found unoccupied. This khan, though a very primitive building, was more comfortable than any in which we had sojourned since our exodus from Bagdad. It was a large square building made of sun-dried bricks; but the walls were much more lofty than usual, throwing a shadow entirely across the court-yard of the building, thus affording a most grateful and refreshing shade, where, after picketing our horses and partaking of a frugal breakfast, we enjoyed a delicious rest till late in the afternoon.

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We now began to realize for the first time that we were gradually leaving the Arabs behind us, and entering into a new territory inhabited by Turcomans, Koords and Persians. Karatepi is a true specimen of an Arab frontier town. The Arab element has almost disappeared, and the natives are a curious mélange of Arabs, Turks and Persians. The Arabic language is but little used, and the Turkish is generally employed in conversation on account of the much greater facility with which the Persians learn it. The inhabitants have hardly any legitimate mode of existence, but are in reality outlaws and bad characters from the adjacent countries. The region is so barren that agriculture or cattle breeding would not be practicable except on the most limited scale. Aware of the bad reputation of the people, Mustapha, who kept guard at the door of the khan, would not allow any of them to enter the building. Late in the afternoon, Signor P. and myself also repaired to the entrance of the court-yard, and were enjoying the invariable pipes and coffee, when our attention was suddenly attracted by a horseman coming toward us with headlong speed. On nearer approach he proved an object worthy of our regard; for I have never seen a finer specimen of the Asiatic cavalier, nor a horse better matched with the rider—young, tall, handsome, with a commanding bearing, and seeming almost a part of the noble animal he bestrode. With his picturesque, bright-colored and richly embroidered Turcoman costume floating gracefully about him, he seemed a very hero of romance, reminding me more of Rinaldo Rinaldini, or Sara, than anybody I have ever seen. As he passed he gave us three salaams in the most aristocratic and approved Oriental style; while Mustapha, who had scanned him very closely, was explaining to us that this individual was one of

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the most noted and daring leaders of the banditti that infest this part of the country, and, from its convenient situation near the Persian frontier, make Karatepi their headquarters. We again heard the tramping of hoofs, and our picturesque friend came toward us at the same rapid pace with which he had passed, keeping it up till he almost rode over us, when he suddenly stopped his charger, and gracefully alighting, he again salaamed, and stood before us as fine a specimen of a picturesque cut-throat as could be seen. He commenced a lively conversation in Turkish with Mustapha in the most unembarrassed manner, and saying that having heard of our desire to procure a thoroughbred, black Arab stallion, he had come to offer his services. If we would accompany him to a village a few miles off he thought he could show us just what we wanted. Now this was rather a suspicious circumstance, as our intentions and desires had not been mentioned since we left Delhi Abbas, so he must have received the news from there in some special manner, and, doubtless, at the same time an exaggerated account of our wealth and supply of Turkish gold; so that had we trusted ourselves with our friend to see the horse in question there would have been but little probability of our returning with whole skins and pursues. With true Moslem courtesy Signor P. asked him to sit down, offered him a pipe, and then told him in Arabic, which our visitor spoke with perfect ease, that he was sorry he could not leave the caravan, though he was anxious to procure a good black stallion; however, as the village was such a short distance, doubtless he could give orders to somebody to bring the animal, and he (the stranger) might be sure of commanding a good price if it should prove what we wished. This evidently disappointed the gentleman,

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though he took particular pains to hide it. After asking a few questions as to our intended route, etc., he took his leave, promising to bring the horse before sunset.

About sunset, two men, apparently Arabs in traveling equipments, and evidently having been several days on the journey, approached the khan on their weary horses, and sought admittance, which we could not refuse them, it being a public caravanserai. They were well-armed, and had the appearance of Zaptichs, (mounted men who make it their business to escort horse caravans and travelers, just as the Aghels make it theirs to escort camel caravans). They said they were from Bagdad, proceeding to Karkuk, and hearing from our people that we were to set out that evening in the same direction, asked leave to travel in our company. As we expressed no objection, they picketed their horses and mingled freely with our people. They greatly admired the revolvers, which for the sake of comfort Signor P. and myself had taken from our belts, and put in front of us. They asked to be allowed to look at them, examined them most minutely, expressed their astonishment in Eastern fashion, and lauded the great superiority of European fire-arms over their own. At last they wished to purchase them, and producing a very valuble collection of finger-rings and other ornaments, offered part of them in exchange. Intrinsically the jewelry was of the greater value; but we did not feel inclined in that isolated portion of the country to part with our chief means of defence. It was lucky we did not, as we discovered afterward, though at the time we had no suspicion of anything wrong, for we had often noticed, in the bazaars of Bagdad, the avidity with which the Bedouins and other natives of Western Asia clustered round and admired European fire-arms.

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By this time the sun had set, and the weather had become cool enough to travel. We were preparing to resume our journey, when a tattered Arab made his appearance on a prancing black horse, which he said he had brought according to orders. On examination however the horse proved far below the mark of Signor P., and although a likely horse was not suitable for his purpose. My young horse had suffered greatly during the journey, and I should have been glad to purchase the Arab stallion for my own riding; but he asked such an exorbitant price, that after nearly an hour's bargaining I was fain to send him away, and content myself with my own nag. This protracted conversation delayed us so that we did not set out for Kaffri till an hour before midnight.

The first part of the night was very dark, and we had to proceed cautiously to keep on the right track; moreover the road was uneven, rough, and intersected with numerous dry water-courses; but our long rest had invigorated us, and we were in high spirits. Shortly after midnight the moon rose, affording us the benefit of her light; the road too became smooth, and slightly undulating, with a gradual ascent. Thus far the two Arab strangers had traveled along quietly and peacefully, which would have quelled all suspicion, if any had been aroused. Toward dawn, as I was riding about fifty yards in advance of the caravan, I observed by the indistinct light, half daylight, half moonshine, numerous dark bodies moving about among the scanty heather a short distance off to our right. At first I thought they were gazelles, but on nearer approach, I saw they were much too large; and coming still closer, I discovered them to be a herd of wild pigs, very common in this district. I immediately communicated my discovery to Signor P., offering to go in

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pursuit of them, and gain a bonne bouche for our breakfast. He endeavored to dissuade me from the enterprise by reminding me of the unsettled state of the country; but instead of heeding his sound advice, I remained obstinate, a failing which has often brought me in trouble before. I was also urged on by Father M., who had a strong desire for a slice of grilled pork, provided he could get it without any effort of his own, and the Arab strangers smiled knowingly, as if they meant to insinuate that I could not bag a wild pig. This imaginary insult stung me acutely, so, unslinging my gun, I dug spurs into my horse, and gave chase to the porkers who, soon discovering my intention, dashed away to the most dangerous and broken part of the country; my young and powerful horse however soon brought me up within about fifty yards of them, when I fired the right barrel, which was loaded with bullet, at the largest of them; but owing to the rough ground, and the tremendous speed with which my horse carried me over it, I missed my aim. I was, however, more fortunate with the second barrel, loaded with large slugs, which I delivered into my porker. Over and over he rolled, but regained his feet in an instant, and bolted. He was, however, unable to keep up with the rest of the herd, and I made up my mind to stick to him. Unluckily I had no more ammunition with me, and somehow I could not manage to draw my revolver from the holster. However, I determined not to let the bristly customer escape. I thought of the long hunting knife I carried in my right boot, with which I might easily kill the boar, if I could first stun him with a blow from the butt of my gun. Suiting the action to the thought, and in the excitement of the chase, quite forgetting that my gun could be shattered to splinters on the powerful, massive scull of the old boar,

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I brandished it wildly over my head, and bearing nearly the whole weight of my body on my right stirrup, was just in the act of bringing down my gun with tremendous force on the boar's cranium, when I heard a sudden snapping of the saddle girth, and felt myself slipping. I fancied I heard the report of a firearm, and then lost consciousness. When I recovered I found myself bleeding profusely from mouth and nose, my head dreadfully dizzy, a loud ringing noise in my ears, and acute pain in my neck and shoulders. I jumped to my feet and looked round. The pigs were nowhere to be seen, and my horse, with the saddle under its belly, was speeding wildly along, and just disappearing behind a small hill in the direction of Kiffri. I called him, but he was too far to hear me; beside the stirrups still hanging to the saddle struck the poor brute at every stride, fearfully lacerating his legs as he pursued his maddened career. As to the caravan, it was nowhere to be seen, and there I stood, bleeding profusely, terribly bruised in the face, and all over my body, and dreadfully sick a heart at this result of my foolish obstinacy; on foot, exhausted, and suffering most acute bodily pain, and intense thirst, in a desert notorious for banditti, unable to overtake my caravan, and at least ten miles distant from the nearest water.

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XVII.

NEW PHASES OF TRAVELLING.

Taking Inventory of Limbs—Badly Scarred—Felix Waiting—Caught—My Horse Stolen—"Stand and Deliver"—Grit—A Fright Imminent—Realizing the Position—Flight—Tracking the Thief—Surrounded—"Surrender"—Felix Recovered—Khan Tholia—"A Slight Mistake"—A Short Rest.

I picked up my gun, the stock of which was cracked through and through; then I felt for my revolver, which was still in the holster strapped about my loins; but one of the shots had been discharged as I fell headlong from my horse. The bullet had passed through the bottom of the holster and alongside my leg, fortunately without wounding me; and this was no doubt the shot which I thought I heard just before losing consciousness. To my surprise, not one of my teeth was missing, though the skin of my forehead, nose, upper lip, elbows and knees was all gone. There was no time left for further examination, if I hoped ever to overtake my caravan; so I quickly shouldered my gun and started off at a brisk pace after my poor horse; but, owing to the rough ground over which I had to travel, advanced but slowly. I aimed directly for the slight elevation on which I had last seen my chesnut charger. Fancy my joy, when, on arriving there, I espied, not more than one mile ahead of me, the caravan halting. I could distinctly see, in the increasing daylight, the towering form of Signor P., overtopped by his huge, fiery-red Egyptian tarbush (Turkish skullcap). Fastening my originally white, but now bloody handkerchief, to the end of my gun, I waved it to and fro, to show the men

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of the caravan my whereabouts. Failing in this signal, I drew my revolver and fired two shots in the air, and soon felt convinced that every one of our men could see and had seen me, the more so as most Arabs are wonderfully far-sighted. About half way between me and the caravan lay the dry bed of the broad periodical river, the banks of which were densely overgrown with shrubs and bushes. Not more than five hundred yards ahead of me, close to the left side of the road, stretched a small poppy-field, about two acres in extent, being the only sign of agriculture between Karatepi and Kifri. There, on the border of this poppy-field, stood my young horse, with the saddle still dangling by one of its girths underneath his belly, quietly nibbling the scanty herbs that grew on the outskirts of the field.

In the centre of the poppy-field, I noticed two horsemen dressed in white abbas (riding-hoods), and looking exactly like the two Arabs who had joined our caravan in Karatepi the preceding evening. They were both armed with lances, pistols and scimitars (strongly curved swords), and had alighted from their horses, one of which was of a gray, and the other of a chesnut color, just like those of the two Arab travellers. Both fellows stood immovable in the poppy-field, leisurely smoking their sībils (short earthen-bowl pipes), while their horses fed on the scanty grass around them. Almost simultaneously, I noticed a third individual, short, thick-set, with closely cut hair; with no clothing on his swarthy body, but the usual long, coarse, brown woolen shirt worn by the Bedouins of Mesopotamia. He gently issued from the poppy-field, and with outstretched hand approached my horse, which made no attempt to escape. I was perfectly satisfied that those three men formed part of our caravan, as no other human being, or tent, hut, or any living creature

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were visible as far as the eye could reach, and I had not the slightest doubt that Signor P., anxious about my safety, had ordered these three men to wait for me and conduct me to the caravan. Moreover, the field in which the men and horses stood was in a slight hollow and considerably lower than the ground where the caravan halted, and the distance between the field and the caravan was less than half a mile, so that I felt sure that every one of the caravan must be aware of the men and horses in the poppy-field. Feeling much exhausted by my long trot up hill, and seeing my horse so near by, and about being caught and brought back to me, as I supposed, by one of our own men, I sat down and quietly looked on. The man caught hold of my horse, patted him, and replaced the saddle upon the back of the animal, then made a motion towards me with his right hand—for each of those three individuals saw me—as if to imply that I might remain where I was, as he was going to bring me the horse forthwith. Presently I saw him vault lightly into the saddle without the use of stirrups, and now noticed for the first time that the stirrups had both been lost in the mad race. However, instead of bringing my horse to me, he dug his heels into the animal's flanks and started off at a brisk canter in the direction of the caravan, and I soon lost sight of him in the shrubbery which grew upon the river banks.

The fellow's delightfully cool proceeding so incensed me that, had I possessed a good loaded rifle at the time, I would not have hesitated an instant to fire at the wretch, even at the risk of killing my horse. Commanding, as I did, only an empty, shattered shot-gun and a short-range revolver, nothing was left but to submit quietly to a tramp after the scoundrel. The two vagabonds in the poppy-field calmly waited till I had

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nearly reached them, when they made preparations to remount. I passed them in disgust without even looking toward where they were, when they had the insolence to ride quite close up, leaving me to walk like a prisoner between them. They took good care, however, to give me a pretty wide berth, as they saw by the expression of my still bloody and disfigured countenance that I was not in the sweetest of humors. I slackened my pace a little to let them go ahead, but they seemed disinclined to do so. This only served to strengthen my belief that they belonged to the caravan. I, therefore, asked one of them abruptly, in Arabic: "*Wheno al hassan malee?*" (Where is my stallion—horse?) Whereupon he coolly and shortly replied: "*Mai arf!*" (I don't know.) Disgusted by this bare-faced lie, I turned my face from the rascals, without another word, but determined to be even with them ere long. Presently one of them presumed to address me with: "*Cowajee! Cowajee! sook fel Caravan fel atchel!*" (Sir! Sir! hasten to join the caravan!) This biting sarcasm raised my temper like lightning, and with an abrupt "*Rooch chanzeer!*" (Be off, you hog!) I sent him about his business. This complimentary soubriquet had the desired effect, for it had no sooner passed my lips than the fellow wheeled his horse around and was about to make a lunge at me with his long, ugly lance. Anticipating this, I was prepared for him. Before he had wheeled his horse quite around, I had stepped quickly about ten yards backwards, cocked both barrels of my gun, and taking aim at his chest gave him to understand that it might be greatly to the advantage of himself and his friend to be off at once. My left hand customer took the hint, and, without bidding either of us good-bye, he violently struck the horse with his heels, and was off at full speed, leaving

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his companion and myself to settle our differences privately. My antagonist, finding himself in the lurch, gnashed his teeth with rage, and, muttering something I could not comprehend, also dashed off; but, while going at a rapid rate, turned half round in his saddle, and, drawing one of his pistols, gave me a parting salute. Though well meant, the bullet whizzed harmlessly above my head into the poppy-field behind me. Always ready to return a compliment, I gave him the benefit of two shots from my six-shooter, the second of which seemed to have hurt his feelings considerably. The pointing of the cocked gun at the scoundrel's carcass was a mere *ruse de guerre*, for the gun was not loaded; but I knew full well the respect paid by Bedouins to a double barrel in the hands of an European, which greatly exceeds their reverence for a revolver, because they believe the latter to be comparatively harmless from their inferior size. Having succeeded in ridding myself of my disagreeable company, I shouldered my gun again, and, advancing about two hundred yards, noticed a distinct line of blood-spots upon the gravelly path, which seemed to indicate that either the fellow himself, or his horse, was wounded, and, if so, by one of my random shots. On arriving at the opposite side of the dry river-bed, I lost all further traces of blood.

Thence, the road to Kiffri ascended, in an almost interminable zigzag line, a high and steep range of hills, behind which the notorious and filthy little town of Kiffri lies ensconced. I, ere long, arrived at a point whence I could survey a large extent of the sinuous mountain road. About two miles ahead of me, I espied the white forms of my two troublesome Arabs, slowly jogging up hill on their lean horses; while only about half a mile beyond them, I saw the caravan; but owing

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to the dust raised by the feet of so many horses and mules, I could not, at such a distance, recognize any person or animal, and it was, therefore, impossible to tell whether my horse and the supposed mūkkāri were with the caravan or not. However, I did not doubt that they were, as they had started long before the two Arabs, and the latter were scarcely half a mile behind the caravan. Owing to an abrupt turn of the road round a projecting rock, I soon lost sight of them altogether, when I stopped quite exhausted from loss of blood and thirst. I sat down for a moment to rest upon a piece of rock, and took a survey of the country lying like an immense chart at my feet. There was the ill-starred spot where I fell from my horse; there the little hill, where I first saw my horse again; there the green poppy-field; there the dry river bed, and the brushwood where I last saw him; but as far as my keen sight could reach, no house, no tent, no living thing could be seen on the vast barren plain except a number of carrion vultures gyrating high above in the clouds, apparently enjoying the sultry morning —a great deal more than I did, for by this time the sun had risen high above the horizon, and the atmosphere was becoming disagreeably oppressive. A swarm of flies, attracted by the clotted blood upon my face and garments, began to disturb me terribly; but even worse than heat and flies was the excruciating thirst which began to torture me, and which I with difficulty succeeded in allaying temporarily by rolling a small, round pebble in my mouth—the usual remedy against thirst employed by Bedouins, travelers, hunters, etc.

Aware that by merely sitting on a rock, I should not reach Kiffri, I pressed on up hill as well as I could, inwardly sore at my bad luck, and at the ingratitude

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of Signor P. in abandoning me to my fate. As to the supposed *mukkaree* who had so coolly enjoyed a ten mile ride on my horse's back at my expense, I was determined to dispatch him outright with the last shot in my revolver, as such a monstrous ass had, in my estimation, no right to live.

This desire for vengeance gave me wonderful strength and energy, and absorbed all consciousness of my physical suffering, and finally enabled me to reach the top of the barren mountain without another halt. On my arrival at the summit of the mount I saw at the distance of about four miles, Kiffri lying in the centre of a small, barren valley at my feet, with a beautiful, silvery rivulet winding its way through the middle of the small, suspicious looking town, surrounded on the south side by several large and shady fruit gardens, encircled by high mud walls. While on the west side of the town several spacious, but desolate looking khans were discernible, the latter having much the appearance of dismal Turkish prisons. A rather romantic background to this panorama was furnished by a double chain of high, rugged mountains, apparently totally destitute of verdure, the "*Yebl Ali*" (Mount Ali) and the "*Kara Dagh*" (Black mountain), the one rejoicing in an Arabic, the other in a Turkish name, and the former ten miles, the latter about twenty miles northeast of Kiffri.

The coming in sight of a place sought by the weary traveler tends greatly to cheer and invigorate him, and such was the effect upon me of this view of Kiffri from to top of the mountain, although it was after all a rather dismal and inhospitable looking place; so that, without allowing myself a moment's rest, I marched down into the valley with a right good will, notwithstanding the piercing rays of the sun, which

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had by this time so heated the barrels of my gun that they literally scorched the skin of my hands. It was, indeed, an unusually hot day, which seemed to keep even the gipsy faced inhabitants of Kiffri indoors, as, with the exception of three stark naked boys driving a number of camels to the rivulet to drink, not a living being was visible either in or round Kiffri. It was about ten o'clock when I finally reached the suburbs of the little town, hungry, thirsty, and utterly exhausted. Like a duck, I made straight for the water, where despite my tender knees I threw myself down at the water's edge and drank copiously of the ice-cold water. While engaged in washing the blood from my face and garments, I observed four men carrying watermelons into a large khan near the entrance of the town, which led me to believe that our caravan was installed there. My supposition proved correct, for on entering the khan I was immediately hailed by our Arabs, while I saw Signor P. and Mutapha in earnest conversation with five or six horsemen armed with lances, pistols, swords, and daggers. I walked straight up to Signor P. and told him rather bluntly that I felt very much obliged to him for leaving me, an intimate friend, so coolly in the lurch, to find my way as I might to Kiffri. Signor P. was quite thunderstruck at my appearance, and by my unceremonious reproof; but especially when my abrupt question, "Where is Felix?" (my horse) was spoken simultaneously with his own, in the same words. To be brief, after a thorough investigation of the case I learned that, although they had halted from time to time on the road, no one in the caravan had seen or heard anything either of me or of my horse, from the time that I left them in pursuit of game; and that, consequently, no one had been sent to assist me in catching my runaway horse or to conduct

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me to the caravan. No one of the caravan had observed the three scoundrels in the poppy-field. Some of the Mukkānàs bringing up the rear of the caravan had noticed the two horsemen, who had joined it at Karatèpi, falling behind and dismounting for the ostensible purpose of refixing a shoe which one of their horses had apparently cast; but this proceeding being of every day occurrence did not attract any particular attention, especially as the two strangers soon rejoined the caravan, and had entered Kiffri in their company. The latter part of this testimony was sufficient for Signor P., Mustapha and myself to make us suspicious, and we forthwith came to the conclusion that poor Felix had been dexterously stolen by these unknown rascals. We resolved, therfore, to secure without delay those two horsemen, who, by-the-way, had been shrewd enough to disappear on their arrival at Kiffri; having never entered our khan, but were said to have dismounted at one of the Persian coffee-houses in town—Mustapha, with the six Zätièhs (irregular cavalry), who had been furnished to Signor P. by the "*Kaimakam*" (chief of a Turkish village or town, who fills the united positions of mayor, judge, superintendent of police, revenue collector, etc., etc.), for the purpose of going in search of me, and escorting me safely to camp—repaired at once to the respective coffee-houses to arrest the two fellows; but the wary birds had flown, and all the researches of Mustapha for them were fruitless, the two highwaymen having in the meantime probably been safely hidden by their associates. However, no time was to be lost, if I ever hoped to see my poor horse again. We therefore applied to the Kaïmakam for six more horsemen to pursue the actual thief, without awaiting the return of Mustapha and his men from their search after the highwaymen.

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The men were immediately furnished, and receiving a brief but minute description of horse and rider, and the promise of a reward of two Turkish *liras* (about nine dollars in American gold), for the recovery of the horse, and double the sum for the recovery of the horse and the capture of the thief; they thundered away towards Karatépi at a break-neck pace, and soon disappeared behind the mountain. Signor P. and myself had very slight hope of recovering the horse, as more than five hours had elapsed since I had last seen the animal, and it was not at all probable that the thief, after getting possession of the horse, would linger near the scene of his crime any longer than was absolutely necessary.

Mustapha however felt sure that if the thief had not already succeeded in escaping with his booty into Persian territory, he would not now be able to do so, and would be hunted down by the men before nightfall. The first mentioned six horsemen immediately after their return from their unsuccessful search for the two other villains in the town, started off at full speed for the Persian frontier, in order to prevent the fellow's escape into Persia, or to pursue him in that direction, and with fair prospects of capture, as their horses were quite fresh, while mine was by that time quite jaded; moreover, the wretch, in order to gain the Persian territory, must either take the road to Kiffri, or make a detour of at least thirty miles round the steep mountain range, which was accessible to horses, only by the road to Kiffri. To this geographical character of the country I no doubt owe the recovery of my horse; for the robber, aware that the animal, badly lacerated on the legs by the stirrup-irons, during his mad race with the saddle underneath his belly, besides being hungry, thirsty, and exhausted, could not well carry him on a forced journey

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of forty or fifty miles more without food, water, or rest, over a barren country, and during the most oppressive heat of the day. He therefore must have thought it advisable to ride a distance of several miles along the bush-covered banks of the river bed, to hide himself with the horse in some dense thicket or dell, until nightfall, and then to steal in the darkness to the suburbs of Kiffri, there to mount a fresh horse of one of his associates, and decamp with both animals across the Persian frontier. His plan, though strategic, did not prove successful, as the sequel will show.

Snugly ensconced in a dense thicket, with my poor horse standing near him, the scoundrel either in anticipation of a whole night's hard work, or, what is more likely, overpowered by the excessive heat of the sun, had fallen sound asleep in blissful unconsciousness of the silent approach of six keen-eyed horsemen, who with the instinct of the bloodhound had discovered the scarcely perceptible marks of my horse's hoofs on the rocky banks of the dry river bed, and were within one hundred yards of their game, when one of the horses, tickled in the nostrils by the dust, snorted. The sound was instantly responded to by my poor Felix from the bush, who, neighing lustily, to the great dismay of his captor, caused the latter to spring to his feet with the velocity of a startled panther, vault upon the animal's back, and crash away through the dense brushwood. He would probably have made good his escape after all had not two men of the second troop of horsemen sent out, separated from the rest and gone down through the upper end of the valley. Imagine the disappointment of the would-be runaway when he suddenly found himself caged. To the right and left he found himself hemmed in by almost perpendicular mountains, and two stalwart horsemen with cocked pistols and long

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glittering lances barring the upper end of the narrow gulley, while six others were close at his heels. Armed only with the usual curved dagger, he saw that it was useless to resist, and not having exactly the mettle of a Leonidas at Thermopylæ, he surrendered. He was thrown unceremoniously to the ground by one of his captors, and his arms firmly bound behind his back by means of a tough leather thong. This accomplished, the captive was replaced upon the back of my horse and led off to Kiffri in triumph. Meanwhile our caravan was busy making preparations to continue our journey, the sun having nearly gone down, and the heat abated. Signor P. and myself had already abandoned all hope of ever seeing the horse again, but left word with the *Kaimakam* to forward him, if caught within three days, to the agent of my brother at Mossul; but if found later, to send him back to my relatives in Bagdad; which orders that worthy official for a "*douceur*" of one Turkish lira, promised, of course, to faithfully execute. The Kaimakam, however, was of the opinion, as was also Mustapha, that the horse, if not taken into Persia, would sooner or later be traced all through Mesopotamia, from the fact that he bore a peculiar white mark on his left haunch, and that the thief would never have touched the animal if he had noticed that fatal mark. As we were again about to start upon our journey, a noise and commotion outside the khan attracted our attention, while Yoossooff-el-Yezidee (anglice: Joseph, the Yezidee, *i. e.*, of the sect of the Yezidees—a tribe or rather sect who are said to worship the devil, and inhabit the mountains of Koordistan—for twenty years a slave, and afterwards a free, converted Moslem) rushed in through the doorway, gesticulating and yelling: "Cowājee! cowājee! dāl, shooff el hassān mālek!" (Arabic: "Master, master,

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come, behold thy horse.") Hastening to the gate we did indeed see poor Felix, covered with foam and dust, with his captor on his back, heading a troop of armed horsemen slowly approaching the khan, and neighing vociferously at the sight of persons familiar to him. This outburst of animal affection and fidelity moved me almost to tears, and drawing my revolver, I would have served out condign punishment to the wretch in the saddle, had not Signor P. wisely arrested my arm.

The pinioned prisoner, in consequence of an involuntary movement at the sight of my six shooter lost his equilibrium, and tumbling headlong from the horse, lay senseless and bleeding upon the stony ground. The sight of the prostrate wretch, bleeding and helpless at my feet, instantly cooled down my wrath, and giving orders to the men to remove the bonds and restore him to consciousness, I was about giving him his liberty, when Signor P. protested and insisted that he should be delivered to the Kaimakam, the proper authority for punishment. This was accordingly done, and half an hour later his captors returned to receive their reward of four liras, which I gladly paid, making them an additional present of a flask of Hall's gunpowder, upon which they set a value almost higher than the gold itself (good powder is a scarce article in that part of the world). What became of the prisoner afterwards, I do not know, as we left an hour after his arrival: but I do not doubt that Kaimakam bribed by the friends and accomplices of the prisoner, and probably himself a rogue, released him as soon as we had gone; for not only are these officials open to bribery, but many of them are in league with robbers, smugglers and other lawbreakers.

Poor Felix, though visibly glad to be with us again, was in a fearful condition, and unable to do duty

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for some time. His legs swelled from the numerous cuts from the stirrup irons; his former smooth and glossy skin was covered with scratches; his back was chafed and he was minus two shoes, and of course walked lame, the general result of the day's wild work. His shoes were soon replaced by the farrier of our caravan; but Felix had to be put on the sick list, and a large strong mule hired in his place at Kiffri to convey me to Karkuk, while its owner had to walk, leading our patient by a headstall.

Owing to the utter prostration of poor Felix our departure was delayed till just before sunset. The road to Tooz Choormāly* (the next station) led right through the centre of Kiffri along the little brook or rivulet previously mentioned. Nearly all the inhabitants, male and female, of this thieving nest were already assembled on the flat roofs of their mud-houses, preparing to go to rest. The passage of the caravan naturally attracted their attention and they gazed down in hundreds upon us as we went through the rugged and filthy lanes. Many of the men struck me as peculiarly well-made athletic fellows, and some of the younger portion of the women were decidedly good-looking, and even pretty, though dreadfully slovenly and dirty; both sexes had, however, peculiarly savage, bold and mischievous countenances, and the occasionally audible epithets, "*kalp*" (dog), *giaour* (unbeliever), *kafir* (infidel), were showered upon us, chiefly by members of the fair sex, who are like their more favored sisters in civilized lands, gifted with a prodigious oral facility. We received their anathemas, however, with stoical forbearance and good nature, thereby only increasing their volubility until we began

* The "Ch" pronounced gutterally as in "Loch" (lake).

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to think we should have a ducking of hot water, or a *sherba* (earthen water-bowl) on our heads. Luckily for us we were soon out of sight of the furies. We felt much relieved to find ourselves once more upon the open desert, although experience had taught us that the utmost caution and strictest vigilance were henceforth absolutely necessary, as long as we traveled during the night, and over such precarious ground. A rugged road led us in a due northwesterly direction for many miles along the southern slope of the mountain range which surrounds Kiffri. This road was an uninterrupted series of steep ascents and decents, rendered rather difficult to travel in the darkness by rough gravel and detached pieces of rock, until we reached a tributary of the "Kissèh Sî" or "Adhem," a considerable river which has its source in the Kara Dagh and joins the waters of the Tigris just below "Khan Tholia," a large caravansary on the left bank of the Tigris, thirty miles west of "Delhi Abbas." The road became more level and smooth, as we approached this tributary, the banks of which appeared to have some cultivation, and to be inhabited, as we heard numerous dogs barking. Over this river was a high and steep bridge, a luxury indulged in in this part of the world, only when the rivers are absolutely impassable without it. We crossed the bridge between one and two o'clock in the morning, and found ourselves, when a few yards further on, assailed by the furious dogs of Tooz Choormāly, the noise of which aroused several of the natives, who were sleeping on the tops of their dwellings. We accosted one of them, and asked him to direct us to the khan, no very difficult matter, as we were standing directly before it. We had traveled only about twenty miles that night, and as "Tāuk," or next station, was not over fifteen miles distant, we determined to remain until three o'clock in the after-

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noon confident that we should easily reach Tāuk by sunset. I had therefore full leisure to examine the large village by daylight. It made a far better impression upon me than any of the places we had visited since our departure from Bagdad.

The houses, though still of rather rough material and primitive architecture, were clean and cheerful looking; the streets were not nearly as neglected and filthy as were those of the preceding station. The inhabitants themselves looked tidy, active and happy, and had none of the villanous, hang-dog look which characterizes the people of Kifri and Karatepi. They own large herds of donkeys, sheep, goats, and immense numbers of fowl; they practice agriculture as much as the rather calcareous, gravely ground will permit; raising barley, Indian corn, cucumbers, water-melons, etc. The village is surrounded on three sides by water, being located on the extreme corner of the land formed by the confluence of two tributaries of the river Adhem, each of which is spanned by a high, rudely constructed stone bridge, built in an angle of about 120 degrees, and paved with huge round boulders which offer a peculiarly slippery footing to shod horses. Both rivers abound with excellent fish of which we caught three during the morning. The inhabitants were quite astonished to see us catch, cook and eat them. It is a singular fact that the Moslems as a rule do not care much about fish, especially sweet water fish, and in many places do not eat the latter at all.

In the afternoon I went out for an hour or two with my gun, bagging one hare and many brace of desert partridges and wild pigeon. In returning to camp along the banks of the river, I found the shore below the village literally covered with natives,—men, women and children splashing in the water in high

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glee. I too felt inclined for a dive, but was afraid that while enjoying my bath my gun and clothes might vanish. An hour after my return to the khan, we resumed our journey. The sun was still high above the horizon when our caravan crossed the second bridge at the further end, or northwestern side of the village; but as a refreshing breeze had sprung up in the afternoon, we traveled comfortably enough.

The road continued rather rugged, and intersected by many of the minor tributaries of the Kessèh Sû or Adhem river. Our men were in the best of spirits; a hilarity probably due to the prospect of an easy day's pedestrian expedition. About half way between the two stations, the road ascended a very steep hill. I was riding, as usual, about thirty yards ahead of the caravan, when I noticed a number of fine partridges scaling the hill, some two hundred yards ahead of me. Anxious to secure a brace or two of them before the caravan should come up and frighten them away, I dug spurs into my animal, quite forgetting that I was no longer mounted on Felix, but on an outrageously lazy, obstinate mule, which vehemently protesting against being so energetically startled out of his reveries by a pair of sharp spurs, suddenly plunged his monstrous head between his fore-legs, and simultaneously kicking up his hind-legs to a prodigious height, successfully reversed my usual position, by pitching me straight on my head in the middle of the road, upon a sharp stone, which made a rather painful impression on my cranium and caused the "crimson" to flow copiously. This abrupt protest from the lazy brute caused the thermometer of my temper to rise prodigiously, the more so that, having some pride in my horsemanship, I was rather ashamed to be unseated by a miserable mule, and that too when going up a very steep hill, a per-

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formance which might have baffled the most vicious horse.

Determined not to let the mule have the mastery, I declined the offer of Signor P.'s splendid horse, with which to continue my journey, resolved to be quits with the brute, and to ride him as hard as he could travel to Tāuk, our next station, if it should cost me my life. For this purpose I borrowed from one of the men a stick about two feet long. This stick I pointed sharply at both ends, and attached it underneath the mule's neck in such a manner that whenever he attempted to lower his head, the upper end would poke him between the jaws, while the other end would press against his chest. In order to steer him better in case of his attempting to bolt I tightened the curb chain of his bridle as much as possible, and vaulted into the saddle. "Old Longear," on feeling my spurs again, naturally had recourse to his old dodge; but he soon found out that it wouldn't work, and for his trouble got a vigorous poke from the sharp pointed stick, as well as from my spurs, which made him shake his head lustily, and snort like a hippopotamus. Another touch with my spurs made him bolt, but as the road led steeply up the hill, he soon tired of it. However, I urged him on with my rowelled persuaders, and soon brought him up more dead than alive at the top. Not inclined to give the brute the benefit of a moment's rest, I trotted him gently down the hill, and, once on the plain, I induced him not only to resume, but to keep up a brisk canter till he was thoroughly subdued, and brought me to the gate of the khan of Tāuk, fully two hours before the caravan arrived, and I doubt whether that mule ever made a quicker journey. He was wonderfully improved by the performance, and gave no further evidence of his dislike to the spurs.

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Thereafter he carried me as gently to Karkuk as my Felix himself would have done.

The caravan arrived soon after sunset and we gave our men and animals a rest till midnight. The khan was of the usual description and unoccupied, which circumstance enabled us to picket our horses very comfortably. But there was nobody living near by from whom we could purchase food for man or horse, so we had to make the best of our scanty provisions, and resume our journey after midnight.

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XVIII.

ORIENTAL LAND MARKS.

Castle of Karkuk—Turkish Cavalry—Military Visitors—Melons and Fruit—Wine Making—Tooloochs—Seasons of Rain—In Camp.

About one o'clock we set out, and travelling in a close column over a pretty fair road, and passing within hailing distance of two or three wretched little villages, we espied by daybreak, in the distance, the faint outlines of the old Castle of Karkuk, built on a huge mound or steep hill, which was of a yellowish red clay, two hundred feet or more in height, by from one to two miles in circumference at the base. This eminence rises boldly, almost perpendicularly out of the centre of a broad valley, and is surrounded at its base by the building constituting the town of Karkuk. As we drew closer, the scenery before us became very picturesque.

The glorious sun, just rising in its majesty from behind the dark and rugged summits of Tebl Ali, and the still more imposing "Kara Dagh" beautifully illuminated the view, and gave a brazen lustre to the towering castle, and the high and slender minarets and huge glazed domes of the various mosques of the town surrounding the citadel, which former was encircled by a wreath of luxurious gardens, overshadowed by dense, dark green foliage, irrigated by a charming little stream, winding its glittering silver waters from one garden to another.

In front of the town, toward the North, lay a large sandy plain, upon which a considerable number of Turkish Cavalry went through their evolutions, their

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bright swords flashing in the early morning sunlight. It was about eight o'clock in the morning, when we entered the town, winding our way through dark narrow and crooked streets, finally entering a small khan adjoining one of the streets of the bazaar. The kahn was crowded with men, camels, horses, mules and donkeys, and soon after our entrance became a scene of terrible confusion. Owing to the carelessness of our men, the horses were placed in too close proximity to each other, and the immediate consequence was an indiscriminate kicking, biting, rearing, jumping, snorting and yelling among the equine species in the khan, rendered worse by the breaking loose of Felix, and three or four more of our stallions, in spite of the almost superhuman efforts of the men in charge. As soon as the stallions found themselves at liberty they pitched into each other with indescribable fury, snorting, yelling, biting and lashing out their hind legs, sometimes rising like dogs upon their hind legs, and attacking each other in that position ferociously with teeth and forelegs. Never before did I witness such a scene of confusion. There, in the centre of the khan were four infuriated stallions fighting each other like so many lions in the arena, knocking over and trampling underneath their feet, men, horses, mules and donkeys. The ponderous camels, alarmed at the deafening noise and confusion, tremblingly squeezed each other against the walls of the building, and others dashed terror-stricken out of the khan, and down the densely crowded bazaar. The intense distress we experienced in witnessing the beautiful and costly horses trying to destroy each other, as well as the sight of two poor fellows lying helpless on the ground with a good chance of being trampled to death, gave Signor P. and myself, with some of our men, a kind of desperate courage,

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and at the imminent risk of our lives we rushed at the furious horses. By means of two long poles, which fortunately stood in a corner of the building, we finally succeeded in separating and securing the combatants, while some of our men picked up the two fellows lying upon the ground. They had been badly kicked and bruised in the mêlée, but happily not dangerously injuried.

A third man was brought in from the bazaar where he had been almost crushed to death against the wall, by one of the frigitive camels.

On examination we, to our surprise, found that none of the horses were visibly injured, and the damage done by the stampede of the camels to life and property in the bazaar was very slight. This "*intermezzo*," though very disagreeable, had one good effect. It had cleared the khan with wonderful rapidity, of most of the obnoxious men, camels, horses and mules occupying the place previous to our arrival.

The news of the impending arrival of the caravan of horses for the Sultan of Frankistan had reached Karkuk long before our arrival, by means of the caravan of Count de B. and other travellers who had passed through the town two days previous. The news spread like wild fire, and our khan was soon besieged with visitors curious to see the famous animals. Among our visitors were both the civil and military Governor of the town; two portly Turks, accompanied by a crowd of officers who were all loud in praise of the horses. A wealthy native Christian an agent for my brother, who had received orders from Bagdad to replenish our purses if required, also made his appearance, and with true Oriental courtesy, at once placed himself and his whole house at our disposal. We were, however, forced to decline his hospitatity, as we could

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DENTISTRY ON THE PLAINS.

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not well leave the horses over night, in the care of a gang of careless Arabs. He insisted, however, on sending us an immense quantity of provisions of all kinds, not even omitting tobacco, and speedily replenished our twenty-four empty wine bottles, with delicious dark red *Diarbekoi* wine, to which of course we could not object, as we had to recruit our physical condition.

During the afternoon, our agent came to take us out for a walk through the town. Most of the houses appeared to us very solidly built of stone, in the Oriental style. Many of the buildings are of considerable size and some of them apparently of great age, especially some of the mosques and minarets, of which there is a goodly number in Karkuk. The streets too have the Oriental character; the principal ones were paved through wretchedly uneven, owing to the boulders used. The bazaar is extensive and well stocked with goods of Asiatic and European manufacture and produce. Provisions were wonderfully cheap, especially fruit, the finest melons, pomegranates, peaches, and most delicious grapes (principally imported from Persia), were selling for a mere trifle. The market was crowded with them, but the inhabitants were somewhat afraid to indulge freely in their use, as there were rumors of cholera throughout the town. If the inhabitants of Mesopotamia knew how to make wine of the tons and tons of grapes which are annually allowed to decay and waste in that country, they might produce a large quantity of a most delicious article.

The bulk of the population of Western Asia is of the Moslem creed, and consequently forbidden to taste wine. The native Christians and Jews prefer Arak (a spirituous liquor distilled from dates and sometimes peaches) to wine, consequently there is very little demand for it.

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The manufacture of wine in these countries is, therefore, naturally yet in its infancy; in fact it is still done in the very way in which father Noah contrived, about five thousand four hundred years ago, to manufacture a bowl of it for his own personal use, which, according to Genesis, chapter 9, verse 21, got the better of the old fellow. Up to this very time, some of the wine manufacturers of Mesopotamia, Koordistan, and Persia employ the original method of squeezing the grapes, one after the other, with their hands, over one earthen or glass bowl, allowing the juice to trickle into the latter; others still less delicate, pound their grapes in a wooden or earthen trough, by means of their feet, a proceeding which scarcely improves the "*bouquet!*" of the wine. If after the fermenting process the wine remains good, so much the better; but if it turns to vinegar, it matters little, for vinegar is extensively used in almost every household in the Orient, and sells, therefore, more readily than wine.

Karkuk numbers from fifteen to twenty thousand inhabitants, three-quarters of whom are Moslems, chiefly Turks, Turcomans, Persians and Arabs. The rest of the population is made up of Armenians, Christians and Jews. The place has a permanent garrison of from one to two thousand Turkish soldiers. The infantry occupies barracks in the castle on the top of the hill, and the cavalry and artillery occupy quarters in the suburbs of the town, the citadel being inaccessible to horses.

Karkuk is a place of considerable importance, owing to its extensive trade connections with Persia, chiefly in tobacco, sheep-wool, goat-hair and carpets. On our return to the khan in the evening, we found three Armenian priests sitting with Father M., our Belgian missionary, and *compagnon de voyage*, who feel-

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ing too tired to take a walk remained in the khan all day. They were all in a dilemma until we came, as neither of the Armenians knew a word of any European language, and Father M. did not know any of the West Asiatic languages, so they were obliged to use pantomime till we made our appearance, when Signor P. offered his services as interpreter of Arabic and French.

The Armenians stated that they had come to pay their respects to their clerical brother, of whose impending arrival they had been informed by friends in Bagdad several days previously, and asked humbly if they could be in any way useful to him. Father M., who had taken a considerable fancy to Karkuk *arak*, smilingly replied that a few bottles of the "pure stuff" would be acceptable to him and his companions, as a medicine on the journey, in case of accident.

Soon after this, the Armenians made their salaams and departed, promising to furnish the desirable liquid, which was duly received at sunset, and the favor returned by a quantity of the best Holland snuff, of which luxury Father M. had a supply presented him by the Pasha of Bagdad when the priest took leave of that worthy personage.

The night passed very quietly, and Father M. slept as soundly as an infant till morning, when he returned the visit of his clerical friends.

Our caravan had now rested nearly two days, and promptly resumed its march in good condition. We traveled due north toward Altyn Kopru, a small, dirty village on the left bank of Zab Asfāl (lower or smaller Zāb), about sixteen miles from Karkuk. Our road led across a high table land till we reached the steep and rocky banks of the river. Here, in the dim light of the early dawn, Signor P. espied a couple of gazelles

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grazing in a ravine. He took my gun, fired, and brought down one; but before any one could descend into the ravine and secure the game, it regained its feet and escaped. Hearing that the distance between Altyn Kopru and Erbil was nearly forty miles, a distance too great for our men and heavily-laden pack-horses and mules to travel in one day, we resolved to go into camp a few miles from Altyn Kopru in order to reduce the length of the next day's journey. The people of the village, however, tried to dissuade us from doing so, asserting that we should find neither houses nor water near the road till we reached Erbil. Believing that the villagers wanted us to remain only to make money out of us, we pushed on through the river, which was rather deep, and saturated our baggage. Poor Father M., who gallantly bestrode an old pony, and the negro girl, Bāhri, who was still sporting her snow-white donkey, almost came to grief in fording the rapid river; for their small animals could not touch bottom in the middle of the current, and, naturally, took to swimming. Both priest and negro lost their presence of mind and equilibrium simultaneously, and but for the prompt assistance of some of our men would certainly have been drowned. A new, bright-red tarbush, which the young priest bought in Karkuk for night wear, was, however, lost, and floated down the stream, bound for the Persian Gulf, much to the discomfiture of its bareheaded owner, who reluctantly pulled his old felt hat out of his wet portmanteau.

Our path continued to lead us due north, and we traveled till about ten o'clock over a perfectly level and barren plain, when some four miles to the left we saw a small village, called Kushtēpē, built on the eastern slope of a long range of low hills, which bordered the plain towards the west. This village was, however,

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far from the road and looked miserable; so we pushed on till noon, without finding water or a human habitation. The sun had by this time become so oppressively hot that our men and pack-horses were quite worn out, and we judged it high time to halt. We had taken the precaution to refill our *tooloochs* (water-tight bags of goat-skin, used to carry butter, oil, water, etc.) at the river which we had forded in the morning, and men and animals had assuaged their thirst at the same time. By husbanding our supply a little, we knew we should have water enough for all the men, and the animals would not suffer from thirst until towards the next morning, by which time we felt sure we should find water. We were about looking out for a smooth place to camp when one of the men, an old mule driver, declared that we should find some water a little further on, as he had seen several plovers rise in the air a few hundred yards ahead of us. We moved on, and soon reached a brooklet, where we halted for the night.

After picketing our horses we pitched our tents for the first time since leaving Bagdad, as this was the first time since our exodus from the "City of the Caliphs" that we had to camp in the open air, having hitherto always managed to reach a khan or a village, at the close of each day's journey, which had hitherto rendered a tent unnecessary. Owing to the total absence of trees and bushes on the utterly barren plain we were obliged to pitch the tent, in order to protect us against the sun, which scorched our devoted heads with relentless power. Our intention was to rest till about midnight, then resume our journey and reach Erwil by six or seven o'clock the next morning. As soon as the sun had set, we struck our tent, rolled it up and replaced it in the bag, prepared to start. The day had closed with one of those glorious sunsets such as

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can be seen only in those desert regions; but the refreshing zephyr usually fanning the weary traveler immediately after sunset unaccountably failed to spring up, and the night came on without producing the very desirable change in the oppressive atmosphere. This only served to increase the sort of lethargy produced in man and beast by the cruel heat of the day. After stationing some of the men at different points round our picket of horses, with orders to keep a good look-out, we unrolled our beds and soon fell asleep; the rest of the men crawled in between the luggage, bestowing themselves as best they could between boxes, leather-trunks, carpet-bags, horse-rugs, saddles, cooking utensils, etc., etc., and quickly followed our example. The night was unusually dark. A dead silence reigned in the camp where but an hour before the buzz as of a beehive had been audible; now a traveler might have passed within fifty yards of us totally unconscious of the presence of twenty-five men and as many horses. About an hour before midnight I awoke and noticed then for the first time lively heat-lightning on the western horizon. Astonished at what was a very unusual phenomenon for those regions I partially rose on my bed and awaited the next two flashes, the sharp, abrupt light of which I could just cast a glance over our camp. Seeing that none of our principal horses were missing and every thing seemed quiet, I laid down again, believing that there would be no rain, and the stifling atmosphere would be rarified by the lightning. Though already near the middle of September, it lacked almost a month yet of the time for the first rains of the season; moreover, it was not likely that I, of all those in camp, should have been the only one to notice the lightning, as certainly some of the watchmen must have been awake. Satisfied that my

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apprehensions of a rain storm were preposterous, I endeavored to go to sleep; but for some reason could not. I got up, lighted my pipe, took a look at Signor P. and Father M., who were both fast asleep, and leaving them walked up to the horses, and endeavored to count them, but could not succeed, as the electric light lasted but for an instant, leaving all in Egyptian darkness again. Failing in that, I was about to pass review of the watchmen, who had apparently been overpowered by sleep, when suddenly down came such a torrent of rain as I never witnessed in my life. It was no ordinary rain; it came in sheets, in bucketfulls, in tons; in short it was a diluvian rain. I need hardly say that it had a wonderful effect upon the sleepers, who all sprang to their feet as if stung by hornets—anxious to protect the bedding, which had already become soaking wet before they were aware of what had occurred. A sorrier looking picture than our camp presented during the time of this deluging and chilling rain can hardly be imagined. Some of us were standing, shivering with cold, with chattering teeth and dripping clothes, groping for our shoes or other wearing apparel, while the horses and mules, with drooping heads, and closed eyes, resignedly waited for the rain to cease. This occurred in about a quarter of an hour as abruptly as it had commenced, and in a few moments the earth, scorched and fissured by an eight months' drought, absorbed all the water, and its surface again appeared quite dry. Not so with our clothing, bedding, etc., which the rain had nearly doubled in weight, much to the discomfort of man and beast. This unexpected shower-bath had however dispelled our drowsiness, and as it was near midnight, we broke camp, and resumed our journey, notwithstanding the almost impenetrable darkness, for the heat lightning had by this time

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entirely disappeared. Not a star was visible, and a dreary silence reigned. A sharp, cold wind, accompanied by showers arose, causing our wet clothes to adhere to our shivering bodies and making that night's journey about as disagreeable a piece of work as ever fell to my lot.

Day finally dawned, the rain ceased, the cold wind died away, and the rising sun finally dispersed the heavy clouds. Never did I welcome the rays of the sun so ardently as after that dismal night. The rest of the caravan sympathized with me fully. Signor P. resumed his wonted joviality, and hummed his usual morning song—usually from "Martha" or "Norma" or "Trovatore;" Father M., with a heavy sigh, took his last pull from the field flask; Bahri cheered up and smiled; our Arabs, who had preserved a mournful silence since midnight, resumed their wonted conversation, and even the horses began to step out with more alacrity.

On reaching the top of a low hill we espied, scarcely two miles beyond, the little town of Erbil, shadowed by a kind of citadel situated upon a high, steep hill, with soil similar to that of Karkuk, and considerably larger. A mass of horses, mules, donkeys, sheep and goats, issuing from the southern gate of the town, and a vast number of camels heavily laden with merchandise, moving slowly toward us, clearly indicated that the inhabitants of the place were already engaged in their daily duties, especially those of the female sex, a great many of whom we found congregated drawing water from the deep cisterns or wells situated without the limits of the town, and carrying the same in large earthen bottles or urns like the Rebecca and Rachel of the Bible. They carry them on their shoulders, or gracefully balanced upon their heads. On coming near the town, the young Arab, whom Signor P. had engaged

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in Bagdad as "*Nalbun*" (horseshoer) to our caravan, asked leave to run ahead and inform his father, also a horseshoer, of our arrival. His request being granted, he ran off, and soon reappeared accompanied by his father, a gray-bearded old fellow, who piloted us to the best khan in town. It had just been evacuated by a caravan, probably the one we had met before our entrance into the town.

As soon as the horses were securely picketed, every one was of course anxious to discard his wet clothing; but only a few of our men were able to do so, most of them having only what they carried on their backs. Nevertheless, these worthies did not seem the least discomposed by this circumstance, and simply selected the sunniest spot they could find in the khan, stretched themselves flat and face downward on the ground, and remaining so till their posterior man was perfectly dry, when they quietly rolled over on their backs and dried their fronts in the same way. The day proved warm and delightful, and induced us to take a short ramble through the place.

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XIX.

NEAR HISTORICAL ERBIL.

Present Appearance—Short Reminiscences—Cafe—Breaking Camp—Zab Ala River—Fording the River—Mountains of Koordistan—Mossul in View—A beautiful Valley—In Mossul—A tricky Pasha—Mossul Merchant—Ninevah Ruins.

The town, if such a miserable nest may be so called, is much smaller than Karkuk, and contains hardly over five thousand inhabitants, who are mostly Moslems, Christians and Jews finding Erbil too fanatic a place to live in peaceably. The dwellings constituting the town are not nearly as decent looking as those at Karkuk, and many of them are uninhabited and lying in ruins. The streets are narrow, dark, and crooked, devoid of pavement and therefore covered in summer with half a foot of dust, and in winter with a still greater depth of mud. The place sports a little bazaar overshadowed with torn and rotten straw mats. Its narrow thoroughfares were originally paved with huge round stones. Time and neglect have, however, rendered the remnants of this pavement rather dangerous to man as well as beast as the narrow passages are teeming with deep holes and projecting stones which are hardly visible in the gloomy, badly ventilated and densely crowded bazaar; *i. e.*, if a series of dark, low, wretched, little stalls, composed of roughly hewn stone, mud, and worm-eaten timber, and scarcely furnished with the most common requisites of every day life may be called a bazaar. Though a wretched place now Erbil is of historical fame, the place where Alexander the Conqueror, fought and won the memorable battle of Arbela

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(the ancient name of Erbil or Arbil) on the second of October, three hundred and thirty-one years before Christ, against the immense army of Darius Codomamus, King of the Persians, whom he totally defeated, and cut to pieces. Darius, who escaped being taken prisoner by Alexander, fled to the mountains, but was soon after taken and murdered by Bessus, who had undoubtedly acted under Alexander's order; the latter, however, feigning pity for the tragical fate of his deadliest enemy, imprisoned Bessus, and dispatched him with his own hand. The above mentioned contest is also known as the "battle of Gaugamela," so named after the river lying sixteen miles northwest of Erbil, better known to us as the "Zab Ala," where Darius's forces endeavored vainly to prevent Alexander's army from crossing the river,

Signor P., and myself, spent the afternoon in the various gloomy, smoky and dirty coffee houses of the place, for the purpose of buying some more fine horses. These coffee drinking and tobacco smoking establishments are well patronized throughout the Orient, and might appropriately be called the Stock Exchange of Eastern cities, as the greater part of the business of the male portion of the population is really transacted therein. They enjoy the patronage of the rich as well as the poor. There you may see the millionare and the beggar, the Jew and the Christian, the Moslem and the heathen, the priest, and the slave-dealer, the General and the private soldier, the master and the slave, the Arab sailor, the banker, the barber, the merchant, the clerk, the eunuch, the horse dealer and horse-thief, the money lender and the porter (Hāmmāl) the jeweller, zāptich (police), the çāvāss (armed servant) and the scavenger, each of these individuals sipping coffee, smoking tobacco and thinking, or talking over his own or his

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neighbor's affairs; while the bazaar proper is destined more for the exposition of good for sale or exchange, as well as for the various workshops of the tradesman. From daybreak till late in the night, the Eastern coffee houses are crowded with real and apparent idlers, occupying in all positions the rough stools, chairs, and divans; some calmly puffing away at their *narghilehs*, *shattahs*, or *sebils*, others sipping scalding hot coffee; and others again, gesticulating violently, and talking vociferously to each other. Many of them sit for hours, nay, for days thus occupied, no doubt considering it the duty of all those who wish to deal with them, to call upon them.

A great many horses were shown to us that afternoon, but with the exception of a beautiful jet black yearling colt, they were below our mark. Signor P. would gladly have bought the latter even at the extravagant price of ten thousand Turkish piastres (four hundred and fifty dollars) which they asked for it, but he feared that the young fiery creature would not stand the slow and tedious journey. He afterwards regretted seriously that he did not purchase it.

The following morning long before sunrise we took leave of Erbil, without our young blacksmith, who preferred to remain with his Father. When day broke we noticed a great many gazelles grazing on the scanty herbs of the plains over which we travelled, but we did not attempt to shoot any of them, as they kept too far out of our tracks; and it would have been useless to pursue them, no horse being able to overtake them on hard ground.

Towards noon we arrived at the highly picturesque banks of the Zāb Alā or upper Zāb—a deep and rapid torrent about fifty yards wide, which rolled its chrystal waters at least two hundred feet below the level of the plain through a narrow rocky valley or

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rather mountain gorge, with extremely steep, almost perpendicular sides covered with scanty grass. *

Before descending the steep banks, we noticed a short distance to our right, an abandoned village of about twenty mud huts, the roofs of all of which had fallen in. The deserted place was however teeming with wild pigeons, many thousand of which were congregated on the small open space of ground in the centre of the ruins, where to all appearance some of the former inhabitants of the village had recently been thrashing wheat or barley. Additional pigeons could be seen flocking to the place, occasionally hotly pursued by hawks or falcons, skimming swiftly along the towering rocks or gyrating silently high above the abysses of the beautiful mountain gorge. Anxious to secure some of the pigeons for breakfast I rode within two hundred yards of the village, where I left my horse to graze till my return, and succeeded in getting under cover of a hut unnoticed by the pigeons, within fifty yards of them. They were so numerous that they covered the little square like a greyish-blue carpet. Bang! Bang! went both my barrels, and twenty-eight pigeons fell to earth. I was rather taken aback when I saw three ferocious looking fellows fully armed, rush out of one of the dilapidated huts, as I advanced to pick up my birds. My six shooter was out in an instant and I resolved to shoot at the first who should interfere with me. I soon saw however that they evinced as much surprise at our encounter as I felt. They noticed however the struggling pigeons on the ground, and composed themselves, and one of them the eldest, addressed me with "*Sabach allah bulcher*" (Good-morning), the

* A natural stronghold and defended as it was by the army of Darius, 331 B. C., impregnable to anybody but an Alexander or Napoleon I.

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usual morning salutation in Mesopotamia and Syria and which I of course returned. I now noticed that they were native Christians, as evidenced by their dress and long hair. They asked me if I were alone. I said no, and at the same time heard the snorting of my horse at my back, and giving a quick glance behind me, I saw Mustapha coming up the hill mounted on his iron-gray nag, leading mine by the bridle. He unceremoniously hailed the three men, and offered them five piasters (about twenty-two cents in gold) if they would pilot the caravan across the river. They consented forthwith, picked up my pigeons and joined the caravan with us. The men then told us that they belonged to the village which was visible, and a short distance from the opposite bank, and they had been awaiting all the morning a caravan of donkeys in charge of some of the villagers, whom they expected from Erbil, where they had sold their barley crop. They said they had retired to the hut for a short nap, were startled by my shots, and rushed out to see what was the matter.

Leading our caravan very cleverly in a zigzag line down the steep banks to the river, they piloted us across a drift some hundred yards higher up, the only place where the roaring, deep and rapid stream was fordable, but not without drenching the luggage carried by the two smallest mules, which were swept off the bottom by a strong current, and with difficulty saved from drowning. Poor Father M. was in too great a hurry to cross the Rubicon and got again into deep water; but this time he stuck to his pony by tenderly clinging with both arms to his neck, and got off without further damage than a jolly cold bath. When the caravan was safely landed, two of our pioneers stripped off their garments and accoutrements, and carrying them in a bundle on their heads, re-forded the

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river, while the third guided us to his village, where we resolved to stay until sunset.

The right bank of the river was not nearly as steep as that which we had left, but was covered with tall grass, shrubbery, and alive with splendid waterfowl, among which I especially noted a black, yellow and white species of wild duck. I also shot a large duck, or rather goose, for its legs were longer than those of any duck, but inferior in size to the domestic goose, and it had a short yellow bill and light brown plumage with white tipped wing feathers. The latter bird is very numerous on the uninhabited parts of the banks of the Tigris and the Euphrates, but I had never before seen it upon those of their tributaries. Its flesh, though dark, is tender and excellent.

Not feeling at all tired, I sallied out as soon as breakfast was over, with my gun on my shoulder, and rambling along the bank, soon espied in a shallow water-hole, surrounded by tall grass and fine flowers, a bevy of ducks, which took wing as soon as they saw me; but I brought down two of them. On walking toward the pond to pick them up, I saw a reptile glide with lightning-like rapidity across my path, and immediately afterwards heard a splash in the pond. Believing it to be a large snake—a species of the animal creation which I make it a point to destroy whenever I come across it—I ran to the pond and fired at it before it reached the opposite side, whereupon it sank. Believing it to be dead, I laid down on the edge of the pond and just managed to reach it with my hand; but I could feel by the writhing of its smooth, slippery body, that it was still alive. I withdrew my hand quickly, as it felt very much like a snake and waited awhile for it to die. Sometime after I groped for it again, but only succeeded in getting my fingers desperately bitten with

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its teeth. Instinctively I jerked back my hand, and to my astonishment I pulled out a writhing animal of the lizard species, with viciously glittering greenish eyes. The singular reptile was nearly six feet long. Its back was covered with a rough skin of the same description as that of an alligator; belly smooth and of a greenish white color, and the toes of its four feet were armed with extremely sharp talons like those of the eagle. I disengaged my fingers with difficulty, as the teeth were long and sharp like those of a wild cat. Though not relishing particularly having an unknown reptile make so free with my fingers, I was glad it was not a snake; for I saw on examining the animal's teeth that its bite, though rather serious, was not venomous or deadly. Nevertheless, I took the precaution to suck and afterwards to bathe freely the wounds. This accomplished, and anxious to learn the character of what looked like a young alligator or a mammoth lizard, I fished out the two ducks I had shot, caught hold of the tail of my last victim, and dragging it after me in the long grass, strolled back to the caravan. Signor P., however, did not know its real name, and the Arabs called it by a name which has escaped my memory. I had seen and killed in my travels in South Africa, Madagascar, India, etc., numerous specimens of the *saurian* or lizard order, from the huge alligator measuring sixteen feet, down to the tiniest lizard scarcely one inch in length. Of those different specimens of *saurians* the "guana" or "iguana" resembled my animal most closely.

The iguana, is a species of lizard from two to five feet in length found in Southern Asia, in Africa south of the Sahara, and America south of Texas, inhabiting tufts or patches of luxuriant grass or bushes, but particularly fond of the gloomy shadows and undisturbed silence of virgin forests, where it is found

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principally on the gigantic trees or climbing from branch to branch with remarkable agility in search of prey. It feeds upon small birds, bird's eggs, squirrels, insects, and vegetable matter. Many of the natives of the above named countries hunt this animal for the sake of food, as they consider it a great delicacy. I once tasted its flesh, from curiosity, while hunting in the territory of the Amazooloo Kaffirs in South Africa in 1863.

The Kaffirs had cut off the tail of a large iguana which I had shot, and they roasted and ate it. On tasting it I found it very like fish, but tainted with a peculiar musk-like flavor, barring which I found it decidedly palatable. The specimen I shot on the banks of the Zab Ala was certainly not an iguana, as it differed considerably from the latter in color, size and shape of the body; besides, the iguana never, that I am aware of, takes to the water, even when pursued, and I doubt if it exists as far north as the thirty-fifth degree of latitude. The creature could not have been a young alligator either, for it was too quick in its movements; alligators, moreover, being quite unknown in Mesopotamia.*

About midnight we resumed our journey, but had to proceed very cautiously, owing to the unevenness of the ground we had to travel over. Soon after our leaving this mountain torrent, it began to rain, much to the disgust of man and beast, as it rendered the ground very cloggy and slippery, and consequently still more difficult to travel. Towards three o'clock in the morning the drizzling rain ceased, and the moon and stars began to re-appear, thus considerably facilitating our progress

* I have since ascertained that the animal referred to belongs to the family Monitoridæ and was a very large sized specimen of Monitor Nitoticus.

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over the undulating ground. When day began to dawn we found ourselves at the foot of a double chain of very steep, rocky, and barren mountains, separated from each other by a little river called "Ghazir" by the natives, and our road led in a zigzag line straight across both of them. Strange to say not a drop of rain had fallen at these mountains, and the road was thickly covered with dust, while but a few miles further east it had rained considerably for nearly three hours. Having been told by one of our men that we should have a splendid view of the town of Mossul from the top of the mountain, Father M. and myself started in advance of the caravan, anxious to get as soon as possible a sight of the Capital of Upper Mesopotamia. On arriving on the summit of the first mountain chain we were rather disappointed by finding out that we must cross still another high range before we could have the desired view. The panorama we enjoyed at the top of the first range was however highly gratifying and interesting to us, for we found the country on our right bristling with innumerable mountain peaks of Koodistan, some of which are of imposing height, and their lofty summits were already beautifully illuminated with the crimson lustre imparted by the light heralding the advent of the morning sun, while their smaller brethren were still wrapt in the dim haze of early dawn, and intersected by innumerable chasm-like valleys, so deeply ensconced between the mountains that daylight had not as yet been able to penetrate them.

Anxious to witness the rising of the glorious sun from the top of the mountain chain in front of us, we did not await the arrival of the caravan, which slowly jogged along the steep defile, but descended without delay to the little river before mentioned as separating the two

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mountain ranges, crossed it and arrived on the summit of the second range just as the sun rose in all his majesty above the mountain region of Western Looristan. What a sublime scene lay before us! Directly in front, and nearly one thousand feet below, lay the immense Tigris valley, and the noble river whose broad and glittering sheet of silver lost itself in endless curves in the haze of the distant horizon. Upon the steep bank of the opposite shore, we descried Mossul, with the apparently snow-white walls of its huge mosques, their minarets, ending in the invariable golden crescent, already illuminated with that peculiar rosy tint given by the first rays of the fiery orb. The higher the latter rose in the cloudless horizon, the more distinct became every object, and for a brief time the whole landscape about us seemed as if illuminated by Bengal fire, and during those moments, even the vast and monotonous flats of El Tesîrch or El Tezîrch (*i. e.*, the island,—the name given by the natives to the large territory lying between the rivers Tigris and Euphrates) looked lovely. The magnificient panorama we enjoyed from our lofty position was rendered still more interesting by the fact that we stood directly above the far-famed ruins of Nineveh, scattered over the whole plain intervening between the mountain range, and the left bank of the Tigris, an area of about thirty miles in length by about ten miles in breadth. But, alas! all that we could see of the relics of the former mammoth city consisted of a series of large irregular mounds or hills of different sizes and shapes apparently composed of yellowish red clay, and entirely destitute of vegetation, resembling from the distance an abandoned fortification consisting of gigantic entrenchments and breastworks thrown up by an army, for the purpose of besieging Mossul, or blockading the river. Certain

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it is that no man, unacquainted with the historical character of that locality, would recognize in the huge elongated earthen mounds scattered here and there over the plain, the remains of the largest city that ever was built upon the globe.

Quite absorbed in the contemplation of the wonderful scenery around us, we did not observe the arrival of our caravan till we heard the cheerful neighing of the numerous horses; which became almost deafening afterwards on the approach of a long caravan of mules and horses slowly wending their way up the mountain from the Mossul side. The sight of a horse was invariably the cause of a boisterous vocal demonstration by our stallions, who, as we traveled from Bagdad to Mossul only by night, rarely met any horses on the road, and when they did, always saluted them loudly and joyously, while several among them showed their aversion to the tall, gaunt camels which occasionally passed us, by shaking their heads and laying back their ears.

Though from the mountain top Mossul looked but four or five miles distant, it was in reality over twelve. We had therefore no time to lose if we wished to enter the town before the heat of the day became oppressive, and proceeded to descend the mountain without delay. We soon met the caravan, which numbered about two hundred and fifty men, women, and children, and about an equal number of horses and mules. On inquiry, they told us they had left Mossul about two hours before sunrise and were going to Karkuk. They were chiefly natives of Koordistan and Mossul, accompanied by several young Turkish officers and privates about to join the garrison at Karkuk. Each man was heavily armed, and though all of them were probably peaceable travelers, many of them looked like highwaymen or

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guerillas in their gaudy apparel, shaggy beards and warlike accoutrements. The women and girls, as they filed past us on their *ghedishes* (cross-bred or inferior horses) and mules, riding astride, as is customary with the women all over the Orient, eyed the "Feringhies" with intense curiosity, and smiled knowingly at the disguise of "Bahri," whose sex was discovered instantly by their keen eyes. With the exception of four or five Persian women, the rest wore no veils, as they evidently belonged to the poorer classes of Upper Mesopotamia, who are less particular about veiling their faces than the women of *Trak Arabi*, or Lower Mesopotamia. We jogged slowly down the steep mountain road, and in doing so, noticed to the right and left of the road several graves. On one of them we saw a little wooden cross, evidently intended to indicate that a Christian was buried there. On inquiring of two of our Mukkāries, who belonged to Mossul, how the occupants of the graves came to perish on the road so near Mossul, one of them told us that they were all victims of highway robbers, killed at different times. The other contradicted his statement by averring that they had all died of cholera while fleeing from Mossul, where that epidemic created sad havoc some ten years before. On our arrival on the plain, we passed another caravan composed of about fifty camels, all laden with merchandise for Karkuk and Bagdad.

We now found ourselves in the midst of the famous ruins of Nineveh, which overshadowed the road on both sides in the shape of huge long mounds of yellowish-red clay which, when viewed from their bases, presented, like the mounds of Babylon previously described, more the appearance of steep and barren hills than the ruins of a city.

About two hours' brisk march brought us to the

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banks of the Tigris, where the caravan halted until Signor P.—who had entered the town to give notice of our arrival to Mr. W., my brother's agent—returned. After the lapse of about half an hour, he rejoined us in company with Mr. W., who had already prepared a khan or caravansary for our accommodation; and who being a friend and a countryman of mine, and had shared my camp life in Soliman Bhagh, received us with the greatest cordiality.

The caravan proceeded without further delay to cross the high, roughly constructed bridge, partly of wood and partly of stone, and the only one across the Tigris between Bagdad and Mossul, and which connects Mossul with the ruins of Nineveh. The bridge was crowded with people, horses and camels, going to and fro as we passed; and the ricketty structure fairly bent under the weight of the crowd. Nevertheless, we crossed safely and entered Mossul through the gate adjoining the bridge, almost unable to pass along through the dense throng of eager spectators anxious to get a look at our beautiful horse, of whose expected arrival many of them had been informed.

After following Mr. W. through a labyrinth of narrow tortuous streets, or rather lanes, on the right and left of which are high, bare walls of dwelling-houses, from the top of which the inhabitants of Mossul, male and female, young and old, gazed down upon our caravan, we finally came to a halt before the huge gate of a khan, situated almost in the centre of the town. Its doors were flung open by the proprietor, and we entered a spacious courtyard, where our men proceeded forthwith to picket the stallions, and unload the pack-horses and mules, which, owing to the constant practice they have had on our route from Bagdad, they accomplished with great celerity. Signor P. then told the men that

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he would give the caravan three days' rest, and at once despatched some of them to the bazaar to procure the necessary provisions for man and beast.

Father M. longed for a comfortable bed and a few nights of unbroken rest, and availed himself of a letter of introduction given to him by the French Missionaries of Bagdad to those of Mossul, with whom he spent the whole time of our sojourn in the Capital of Upper Mesopotamia. Signor P. and myself were invited to take up our quarters with Mr. W., which Signor P., however, courteously declined, pleading that he could not leave the valuable horses in charge of his men without risk. Having no responsibility except for myself, I did not hesitate to accept Mr. W.'s invitation to share for a few days his quiet bachelor home, especially as my host, being like myself an inveterate sportsman, would no doubt render my sojourn quite agreeable. Bahri, the negro girl, was temporarily cared for by the French Sisters of Charity, who act as female missionaries in that town, and as such do much good among the semi-civilized population. They were to impart to the poor girl the first ideas of Christianity, which the latter so ardently coveted, and also to provide for her external appearance by clothing her with decent garments in accordance with her sex (and after the fashion of the European), as she would not be received aboard the mail steamer in male attire when we should arrive at the shores of the Mediterranean.

The day of our arrival, Signor P. and myself, accompanied by Mr. W., paid a visit to the Count de B., whose caravan, my readers will remember, had started simultaneously with ours from Bagdad; but owing to longer marches had reached Mossul nearly three days before us. He was encamped in a khan not far from the one occupied by our caravan, and was in the best

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of spirits. The ladies appeared much stronger than when they left Bagdad in spite of the continued jolting of the *dachterwan*, and all the various discomforts of the journey. They were amused by my adventure between Karātepi and Kiffri, and congratulated me on the recovery of my horse from the clutches of the highwaymen. Count de B. declared his intention to shorten the journey to Beyrout by proceeding from Mossul due west across the territory of El Tesireh towards the Euphrates, cross that river at Rakka, a little Arab town about one hundred and twenty miles below Berachick, and travel thence straight towards Hamah, a town of considerable size, about seventy-five miles south of Haleb, or Aleppo, thereby shortening his journey by at least four hundred miles. Signor P. disapproved of the plan, which he declared was very hazardous. He reminded his friend of the lawless character of the Bedouins who roamed that territory, and finally advised him for the ladies' sake to take the more circuitous but less dangerous route via Diarbekir and Aleppo. Count de B., however, remained inexorable, insinuated cowardice on our part, and turned the conversation to other topics. The same evening Signor P. had the misfortune of unconsciously interfering with the Count by purchasing a magnificent stallion for which Count de B. had been negotiating before our arrival. This imaginary insult brought matters to a crisis, and the following day, before sunrise, the irate count left Mossul at the head of his caravan without bidding us farewell.

My bachelor host, Mr. W., was very comfortably installed in his snug little castle. He had, in order to counterbalance the advantages or drawbacks of "single blessedness," surrounded himself with all the paraphernalia of a Nimrod, viz.: an old male cook groaning

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under the weight of the united dignities of *gastronomitte*, chamber-maid, hostler, veterinary, dog-trainer, falconer, laundress and errand boy. This individual was in fact in charge of everything, the factotum of the household. The horses—two splendid hunters and a young colt—picketed right in front of the dining-room and protected from the rays of the sun by a lofty shed of straw mats, were as scrupulously clean as race-horses, while their saddles, bridles, knee-caps, etc., appeared as if their welfare was a matter of no small consideration. Half a dozen rough-haired greyhounds, kept purposely lean, almost by starvation, that they might travel over the ground more fleetly, lay scattered about the shady nooks in the courtyard, while two or three portly cats occupied the divan in the dining-room, buzzing like the pulleys in a cotton mill, apparently plunged in deep thought. A little, ugly, mischievous monkey attempted all sorts of impossible gymnastic evolutions on the clothes-line in the yard, and a couple of sleek feathered falcons perched on a pole near the entrance of the dining-room (and like the hounds almost starved to death to prevent them from getting lazy), uttered a piercing cry whenever the cook made his appearance, they evidently supposing him to be continually carrying food about his portly person. The interior walls of the dining-room, a whitewashed apartment about ten by twenty feet, instead of being adorned like the European shooting boxes with pictures by Landseer, Rosa Bonheur, etc., exhibited no such embellishments (which are too costly for Mesopotamia), but the stuffed heads and skins of boars, gazelles, foxes, leopards, etc., varied by an occasional gun, revolver, hunting knife, powder flask, shotbag, leash, whip, etc., while dangling from a peg in the walls, were the ornaments of the room. In short, everything

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in the little residence of Mr. W. indicated that a bachelor, and a passionate sportsman dwelt there; and as I am pretty much of the same persuasion, I could not have dropped into more congenial quarters, and felt immediately at home.

The houses of Mossul are very similar in shape and convenience to those of Bagdad, excepting that the material used for the former is almost invariably stone, while that for the latter is without exception, brick, or rather sun-dried clay. The "*Serdap*," the subterranean vault or basement-room, is, however, rarely to be met with in Mossul houses, there being no necessity for it, owing to the climate of Mossul being less hot than that of the "City of the Caliphs."

The thoroughfares of Mossul are, as in all other Moslem towns in the Orient, uncomfortably narrow and filthy, being in fact nothing better than a series of zigzag lanes winding in snake-like lines between high, bare walls, the latter pierced here and there by a doorway and a couple of small, square window openings at least ten feet from the ground and strongly barricaded by iron bars or wooden trellis-work. These thoroughfares, besides being narrow, are extremely difficult to travel, especially on horseback, when they are really dangerous, as the horses are likely to slip on the excessively smooth, round boulders with which most of the streets of Mossul are paved. This circumstance naturally increases the dangerous condition of the streets.

In my various rambles about the town I had an opportunity to visit the bazaar, which, though far inferior to the main bazaar of Bagdad in size and richness, is, nevertheless, very interesting, but bears the usual characteristics of Oriental bazaars.

The first time I rambled through the bazaar of Mossul my sense of smell was cruelly outraged by a

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pestilential odor from the carcass of a dead dog, covered with flies, lying in the centre of one of the most populated streets. Every passer-by gave the obnoxious canine a wide berth, and my horse gave evidence of the same intention by repeated loud snorts. Within four yards of where the dog lay stood the stall of a Moslem butcher. From the hooks in the wall of his establishment hung the various parts of an animal which was probably a dead sheep of extreme leanness, but to me looked suspiciously like a playmate of the defunct animal in the street. The portly butcher, seeing that the passers-by, instead of stopping at his stall to buy meat, had been for some time hurrying by, probably came to the conclusion that the broiling sun had not improved the atmosphere around his stall, and made up his mind to sacrifice himself *pro bono publico* by having the obnoxious canine remains removed at his own expense. Suiting the action to the thought, he forthwith called in a young half-starved and outrageously dirty and filthy vagrant, a native of Koordistan, with whom he struck a bargain for the removal of the carrion. The vagrant, having received perhaps a kāmeri (¼ Turkish piaster, about 1⅛ cents American money), flings a noose round the leg of the carrion, drags it, according to the pay, ten, twenty, or thirty yards farther down the street, slips the noose off and walks away unconcernedly without the dog, which continues to perfume that locality until the person occupying that house or stall nearest to it can stand it no longer, and has to sacrifice another kāmeri in order to have it removed from ten to thirty yards further on; and thus the carcass travels by degrees till it finally reaches the suburbs or the river. Not one of the inhabitants will pay for its entire removal, but will just pay enough to have it taken from his own and deposited at the door

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of an enemy or disagreeable neighbor. This custom is not prevalent in Mossul only, but is so all over the Orient, and is, no doubt, often the cause of the fearful diseases and epidemics of the East.

This city, like Bagdad, is surrounded by a high wall, which is however mostly reduced to ruins, and scarcely of any use now, except to oblige people to enter or leave the city by the various gates, which are all guarded by custom-house officials.

Mossul, as previously stated, is the capital of Upper Mesopotamia, and numbers about forty thousand inhabitants, composed of Turks, Koords (Turcomans), Persians and Arabs, of whom sixteen thousand profess the Islam, fourteen thousand the Hebrew, and the remainder the Christian faith. The European residents of Mossul number about fifteen, composed of the French missionaries and the Sisters of Charity, the French Vice-Consul and my brother's agent.

As to their comforts, they are still worse off than the Europeans in Bagdad; in fact they literally live as hermits, dwelling as they do in a dreadfully dull city, surrounded on all sides by the desert destitute almost entirely of vegetation. The forests of date trees which surround Bagdad contribute much to the comfort and embellishment of that city, but Mossul is situated beyond the latitude in which dates abound.

The largest, and by for the best looking building of Mossul, is the "*Serail*" or residence of Pasha,* the Governor, a very large, plain square building situated outside the city near the river; but though a very substantial building, it looks more like a factory, or an arsenal, than the residence of a Governor.

The garrison of Mossul, numbering from three to

*Since removed from office by the Sultan.

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four thousand men, mostly infantry, and quartered in the various large barracks along the river banks, does consequently not stand under the command of the Pasha of Mossul, but under that of a Brigadier-General, who receives his orders from the Governor of Irak Arabi.

Pasha having heard that Signor P. was anxious to buy a few more thoroughbred horses, and having probably been told that the "Feringhee," if shown a suitable animal, would certainly buy it at any price, knew that one of the colonels of the garrison owned a most magnificent stallion. He bought the horse from the Colonel, who, in order to remain on good terms with the Pasha, was obliged of course to take for his animal whatever the Pasha chose to pay or to promise to pay. No sooner was the stallion the property of the Pasha, than he offered to sell it to Signor P., who went the same evening, in company of Mr. W. and myself, to the Serail, for the purpose of examining the horse. We waited there impatiently for two hours for the appearance of the horse, which was kept in a stable by itself, and to which no one had access. The gate of the court-yard finally opened, and an Arab "Saïs" (groom), mounted on a magnificent bay horse, made his appearance in front of the Serail. The animal, the very counterpart of the famous "Bucephalus" of Alexander of Macedonia, was indeed the *ne plus ultra* of equine beauty, and to give its appearance still more effect the Pasha had wisely caparisoned it in the most gorgeous style, with saddle, bridle and martingale covered with solid gold and silver ornaments. The horse, as if aware of the impression it was intended to make upon the "Feringhees," was almost unmanageable. He foamed, pranced and plunged in a manner most trying to the horsemanship of any but the most skilful rider. The Arab, however, a true son of the desert, kept his seat

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with imperturbable coolness, and admirable dexterity. The matchless symmetry of the magnificent steed, his great size for a thoroughbred Arab horse, and the comparatively low price demanded for the animal, ten thousand Turkish piasters, about $450 gold, induced Signor P., after a thorough examination, to proceed forthwith to the Pasha for the purpose of closing up the trade or purchase; but on counting out the money, the Pasha coolly told him that he had made up his mind that the horse was fully worth eleven thousand piasters and would therefore be held at that price. Signor P., rather vexed at the turn matters had taken, withdrew with the intention of thinking the matter over. The following day he called again at the Serail, agreeing to pay the eleven thousand piasters, whereupon the Pasha, anxious to get a few more thousand out of the giaour (Christian), coolly told the Signor that if the horse was worth to him, Signor P., eleven thousand piasters, he was worth twelve to the Pasha. Disgusted, Signor P. withdrew without showing any outward signs of discontent; but determined to be even with the Pasha, he begged permission to see the horse once more on the following day. The Pasha, supposing that the stupid "Feringhee" would finally agree to pay even the twelve thousand piasters, smilingly consented. Signor P. then dispatched his men to the bazaar, directing them to spread cautiously the rumor that the Pasha was going to exhibit on the day the finest stallion that ever trod the soil of Mesopotamia, and that at the same time the animal would be examined by the famous giaour, the veterinary of the Sultan of Frankistan, who was unequalled in the world, as an authority in judging horse-flesh. This rumor had the desired effect. A large crowd, composed chiefly of horse dealers, horse fanciers, etc., assembled at the time appointed in front of the

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Serail. The horse was brought forth and elicited a murmur of approbation from the crowd of spectators, which died away to a profound silence when Signor P.'s tall, commanding form approached for the purpose of examining the magnificent creature, and every eye was strained to read his verdict from the expression of the face of the famous gray-haired judge. After some examination of the mouth, nostrils, eyes, ears, throat, chest, feet, etc., etc., Signor P. finally spoke gravely, declaring the horse to be a model of equine symmetry, but unfortunately liable to become affected with the glanders. Then coolly turning towards the officer and the "sais" (groom) in charge of the horse, he civilly requested them, in a tone loud enough to be heard distinctly by the spectators, to give the Pasha his respects, and to tell him at the same time that the "Feringhee" declined to buy the animal at any price. He then quietly returned to the caravansary with us, satisfied that he had well punished the Pasha.

Just before our departure from Mossul, the Pasha sent word by one of his officers that he was willing to part with the horse for the original price of ten thousand piasters; but Signor P. declined to have anything more to do with him.

Owing to the majority of the inhabitants of Mossul being of Turkoman, Turkish or Persian extraction, the language principally used is Turkish, more so than the Arabic as we travelled north; so that in Diarbekir, the capital of Koordistan, we found the latter language as rarely used as, for instance, the French is in America, or even less. Both sexes dress very much like those of Bagdad, only somewhat more substantially, owing no doubt to the difference of the climate. The natives of Upper Mesopotamia, male and female, are considerably stronger, and of stouter build than those of Lower

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Mesopotamia. Their features are also quite different, those of the former being of rosier, healthier complexion, fuller, more fleshy, and consequently coarser looking than the former. Brown, auburn, and curly hair, blue eyes and rosy cheeks are by no means scarce in Upper Mesopotamia; but they are very much so in Lower Mesopotamia.

The male population of Mossul consists chiefly of merchants, carriers, and tradesmen. The former do an extensive trade with Koordistan, Persia, Lower Mesopotamia, and the Bedouin tribes of Upper Mesopotamia; exchanging European merchandise brought by camel caravans from the Mediterranean sea; and home-made goods, such as coarse carpets, clothing, leather ware, fire-arms, etc.; for gall-nuts, timber, tobacco and goats' hair, chiefly imported from Koordistan and Persia, and also for sheep's wool produced by the large herds of sheep owned by the Bedouin tribes of El Tesērch. The Mossul carriers gain their livelihood by carrying merchandise to and from the surrounding countries by means of camels, horses, mules and donkeys, or by *kelecks* down the river to Bagdad. The Mossulites are good metal workers, shoemakers and saddlers, but especially good weavers, having in former times been famous as the manufacturers of a thin cotton fabric, called to this day "muslin" (French "*mousseline*",) derived from "Mossul," or "Mosul." The greater part of the vegetable food of the population is imported; agriculture being practiced only on a very limited scale. There are, however, abundant indications that the whole Tigris valley contains many rich petroleum wells, which only need developing to prove their value.

Several years ago, an enterprising German Jew, Mr. Sp., who had, under the protection of the famous Omer Pasha, while the latter was Governor of Mesopo-

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tamia, amassed a fortune in Bagdad by means of skillful speculations, and afterwards squandered it rapidly, tried to conciliate the fickle Goddess Fortuna by exploring the numerous petroleum wells below Bagdad, engaging Bedouins to bail the crude stuff out of the wells and bring it to Bagdad in leather bags, where he extracted the petroleum, and in absence of any more appropriate vessels bottled it. I do not know how he disposed of it or whether he managed to make it pay. I can say however that petroleum wells are now plentiful in Lower Mesopotamia. The age of the town of Mossul is not exactly known; but it is supposed that it was built by the Turcomans about the time of the crusades. Our departure from Mossul had been fixed by Signor P. for the third day after our arrival, but was unavoidably postponed for a couple of days, which I spent in visiting the ruins of Aineoch in company with Mr. W. and an acquaintance of his.

The first day we proceeded to Nimrod, the highest and largest of all the huge mounds, which now form all that is left of the ruins of the ancient mammoth city. Nimrod is situated about four miles above the junction of the Zab Ala with the river Tigris, and about twenty-six miles below Mossul. We left town two hours before day-break, and after crossing the rough bridge over the Tigris, followed Mr. W.'s *cavass* in a brisk canter over the perfectly level country along the left river bank. The stars shone beautifully bright, and enabled us to see our path distinctly for a considerable distance ahead. Now and then we passed within a few hundred yards of a solitary mound, which, owing to the entire absence of vegetation, and the ghastly yellowish red color of the soil of which all these mounds are composed, presented an extremely gloomy aspect. Innumerable bats could be discovered whirring noiselessly

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in all directions through the sultry atmosphere, rendered almost unendurable by the dead silence which reigned over the desolute plain. Only once or twice during that desolate morning ride could the half jubilant, half wailing howl of the prowling jackals echoed over the dismal plain, and the occasional shrill cry of the Kee wee or desert plover be heard.

During the course of our progress we had to ford several little tributaries of the Tigris, and in doing so startled numerous water-fowls, which invariably took to wing with vociferous shrieks, and vanished quickly out of sight and hearing. The first light of day revealed to us Nimrod in the shape of a huge, gray, quadrangular hill or mound with almost perpendicular sides and flat top, which rose like a mammoth wall before us at a distance of not over six miles. Half an hour later, we arrived at the foot of the mound, and found it to be inaccessible to horses; but seeing about half a mile distant from where we stood a couple of low, black, Bedouin tents, we sent the *cavass* thither with our horses, which he was to picket and feed there, while we proceeded on foot to inspect the ruins.

We found them strewn with débris of brick, and the huge mound, which could not be less than one hundred feet in height by about eight hundred yards square, was very uneven and intersected by numerous, large, irregular holes and ditches resembling abandoned stone quarries or excavations, evidently the work of human hands, and probably the very places where Rich, Botta, Layard and other travelers and archæologians searched for, and brought to light, the numerous antiques which now adorn the British Museum, and which have given us more information about the history, the degree of civilization, etc., of Nineveh and

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the Assyrians, than all the traditions and reports of our ancient historians combined.

Anxious to visit all the principal mounds scattered over the site of the ancient city, we tarried but a few hours at Nimrod; but after our inspection of the ruins, we repaired without delay to the Bedouin tents, where our horses were picketed. We were received by the inhabitants of these tents with the wonted hospitality of these nomades, the head man of the little community having prepared quite a sumptuous breakfast composed of boiled goat's flesh, roast lamb, a kind of onion salad, butter, cheese, milk and bread. Our host remembered perfectly well the "Feringhee," Mr. Austen Henry Layard, who, in 1849, visited the ruins of Nineveh, discovered and carried off to Frankistan (Europe), at such immense expense, the huge lion with a human face, as the natives call the mammoth sphinx of stone now exhibited in the British Museum in London.

The heat of the day being less oppressive than we had expected, we made up our minds to return to Mossul before night, and left the little Bedouin camp about noon, after having bought a few small antiques from the hospitable Bedouins, they persistently refusing to accept any remuneration for their hospitality. On our way home we made a considerable detour by visiting the mound of Selamia or Selamiyah, situated about three miles and a half north of Nimrod, and thence the mound Kharāmles or Charāmles, which lies about fifteen miles northeast of Nimrod. Both these mounds are, however, inferior to Nimrod in size as well as in general appearance, and bear as yet hardly any traces of having been examined or explored by archæologists, or even by the natives. We, therefore, did not stop long at either of them, but pushed on across the barren plain to Mossul, the gates of which town we entered an hour before sun-

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set, after a hard day's journey of at least sixty miles. The following day we recrossed the bridge and proceeded to Kouyunjik or Koyunjik, a mound situated but a few miles from Mossul on the opposite side of the Tigris, and running parallel with the left bank.

This mound is nearly nine hundred yards long, over five hundred broad, and about eighty feet high. The sides, though steep, can be climbed with little difficulty, and from its summit the visitor enjoys a splendid view over the whole area of ruins, as well as over the Tigris and eastern portion of the town of Mossul. Close by is another large mound, called by the natives Nebbi Yunus (*i. e.*, the grave of Jonah), because of their belief that the prophet Jonah, the submarine traveling celebrity (Jonah i, 17), who visited Nineveh about the year 862 B.C. (Jonah iii, 3–5), lies buried in this mound, and in whose honor the native Christians of Mossul have built a small chapel on the top of the mound, quite a decent looking structure built in European style, with high, narrow glass windows and white-washed walls. The road from Ebil to Mossul passes within one hundred yards north of this chapel, which owing to its familiar architecture is pleasant to the eye of the European traveler, and probably the only building of the sort in Mesopotamia; which leads me to believe that its architect was some European missionary.

About twelve miles northeast of Mossul lies Khorsabad or Chorsabad, another or these mounds; but it is far inferior in size to any of the before-mentioned ones, and its only special interest is its level top. The first explorations of Nineveh by Europeans were probably those of Mr. Claudius J. Rich during the year 1820, at which period he acted as political agent of the East India Company at Bagdad. This gentleman drew a chart of the locality, and owned a fine collection of

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antiques found in these ruins, consisting of urns, alabaster slabs, bricks, etc., some of them bearing inscriptions in cuneiform, or arrow-head characters decipherable as yet to a very limited number of English and German philologists only.

In 1843, Mr. Paul Emil Botta, the French Consul of Mossul, assiduously explored that part of the ruins of Nineveh situated just opposite Mossul, and not only excavated a great many antiques, but actually discovered in the sides of Konyunjik the remains of a magnificent palace adorded with beautiful bas-reliefs representing human beings and animals, some of them bearing also inscriptions in cuneiform characters, and all with more or less traces of having been subjected to fire, by which element this palace, and indeed the whole city is supposed to have been destroyed. Two years after Botta's discoveries, Austen Henry Layard, the English traveler, visited the ruins of Nineveh, and began excavations at Nimrod, Nebbi Yunus and Konyunjik; but soon becoming aware of the expensiveness of his undertaking returned to England, but re-appeared at Mossul in 1847 or 1848, and resumed his excavations on a grand scale, being provided with funds for the purpose by the trustees of the British Museum. For a long time he employed several thousand natives, and sent to England an astonishing quantity of antiques, some of which were of great size.

He was most successful in his explorations at Nimrod, where he had laid bare the remains of an immense palace supposed to have been nearly four hundred feet long by three hundred feet wide, and ascribed to Asshurdanpal, better known as Sardanapal; not to be confounded, however, with the effeminate and debauched ruler of Nineveh, but the famous warrior, who is supposed to have ruled Assyria about the year 950 B. C.

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The remains of this palace were discovered on the northwest side of the mound. In his excavation in the centre of the mound he struck upon the scanty remains of another palace supposed to have been built by Shalmannbar, son of Asshurdanpal, who succeeded to the throne of his father, and rebuilt by Ivalush III. (the king "Pul" of the Bible, 2d Kings xv, 19, 20), successor to Shalmannbar, who ruled Assyria about the year 770 B. C. Mr. Layard was likewise very successful in his researches in Konyunjik, where he discovered the ruins of the palace of Sennacherib, who ruled Assyria, and on whose monuments the name of Hezekiah, king of Judah, is mentioned, as well as the invasion of his dominions by the Assyrians.

All the remains of the palaces brought to light by the above-mentioned explorers were buried in the sides and tops of the mounds, and in different parts of the plain in depths varying from three to thirty feet. The extent of the ruins, the situation, size, and shape of the different mounds, the character of the innumerable antiques excavated there, the places where these relics have been discovered, etc., etc., combined with the traditions of the Bible and historians, enable the present generation to conjecture with considerable certainty the extent, shape, population, institutions, age, history, etc., of the mammoth city, as well as of its principal buildings.

With regard to the origin of Nineveh, some historians differ from the Bible, as is the case with regard to the origin of Babylon; for while the Bible (Gen. x, 11) ascribes the creation of Nineveh to Asshur, some historian believe its founder to be Ninus, the husband of the famous Semiramis, who is supposed to have ruled over Assyria, Babylonia, Media and Armenia about the year 1900 B. C. The same writers assert also that

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the city derived its name from that of the last-mentioned ruler; while still others, and conspicuously among them, Sir Henry Rawlinson (formerly British political agent in Bagdad, and probably the most competent authority in deciphering or reading the cuneiform or arrow-headed characters), believe Ninus and Semiramis to be mythical personages of Greek invention, as they appear to be unknown to Babylonian writers.

However this may be, there is every probability that the founding of Nineveh dates as far back as that of Babylon, though the most ancient palace yet discovered at Nineveh (the northwest palace at Nimrod) does not date back of the tenth century B. C. From thirty to forty kings are believed to have reigned over Assyria during the existence of Nineveh, but nothing definite is known of most of them.

The first king, of whose rule over Assyria we have proof, was Bellush, and the last was Sardanapalus, an effeminate debauchee caring little about the welfare of his subjects, and spending his time in sensual revelries; in consequence of which Arbaces, the Governor of the province of Media, and Belesys, Governor of Babylonia, assisted by the Governor of Bactria, conspired against him, and finally besieged him at Nineveh.

For fully two years they beleagured the Capital without success, but during the third year, the river Tigris inundated its banks, and destroyed twelve thousand feet of the city walls, through which breach the rebels entered. Sardanapalus, aware that he was a doomed man, had collected his whole court and his immense treasures within the precincts of his gorgeous palace, and being informed of the conquest of Nineveh, deliberately set the palace on fire, and with his adherents perished in the flames before the victorious rebels could reach him.

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Nineveh, the capital of ancient, or rather primitive Assyria, was devastated; but a second Nineveh soon arose out of the ruins of the first, and as the capital of modern Assyria attained still larger dimensions than it had before its fall. Although it is generally believed that the final fall and destruction of Nineveh took place about the year 603 B. C., there are eminent historians and archæologians who differ more or less from this opinion. So, for instance, the famous historian, Herodotus, who lived from about the year 484 to 408. B. C., and who avers that Nineveh was destroyed about two hundred years before his own time. The distinguished British archæologian, Sir Harry Rawlinson, dates the final fall of Nineveh about the year 625 B. C. Whatever the exact date of the destruction of Nineveh may be, so much is certain, that its demolition was accomplished so thoroughly, that Xenophon, the general and historian, who in the year 401 B. C. led ten thousand Greek warriors over the site of the capital of Assyria, did not notice any evidences of a bygone city, and probably for the same reason none of Alexander's historians refer to Nineveh or its ruins, although the entire army of the famous conqueror marched across its site a day or two previous to the memorable battle of Arbela, or Gangamela, Oct. 2, 331 B. C. As to the extent of Nineveh, the most authentic writers agree with each other. The prophet Jonah, who, as before stated, visited the capital of Assyria about the year 862 B. C., describes Nineveh as "an exceedingly great city of three days' journey (60 miles) in length," Jonah, iii, 3, 4. With regard to its population and means of subsistence, we read in Jonah, iv, 11, that the Lord said to him: "And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than six score thousand persons, that cannot discern between their right hand and their left

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hand; and also much cattle?" By the six score thousand persons unable to discern their right hand from their left is meant, no doubt, that Nineveh contained in the time of Jonah, one hundred and twenty thousand infants, viz.: innocent human beings, for whose sake the Lord would spare the wicked city. Now, if we calculate the average of only ten persons above the age of three years (the age, in my opinion, a human being of ordinary intelligence may fairly be expected to distinguish their right from their left hand), to every infant or child below that age, the population of Nineveh could not be less than one million two hundred thousand. There can, however, scarcely be a doubt, that it was considerably more numerous, as the human being, up to this day, develops itself very early in that country, and lives to a great age.

Ancient historians describe Nineveh as having been a quadrangular city, situated on the left bank of the Tigris. They give the city an *extent* of only sixty miles, but this is very likely, nay, undoubtedly, incorrect; for it must not be forgotten that all of the last-named writers lived centuries after the destruction of Nineveh, consequently all of their reports are from "hearsay;" while Jonah, who (in Jonah iii.) describes the city as being three days' journey (sixty miles) in *length* alone, dwelt in Nineveh when it was still in its glory. Moreover, it is stated (in Jonah iv., 11) that Nineveh "contained much cattle." Nearly all historians and archæologians, however, agree that Nineveh was much larger than the city of Babylon; was strongly fortified by a wall one hundred feet high, broad enough on the top for three chariots driven abreast, and surmounted by fifteen hundred towers, each 200 feet in height. This mammoth fortress was connected by a ditch two hundred feet broad, which could be flooded

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by means of sluices and canals, and the city rendered thereby unapproachable, like Babylon; and, like the latter city, Nineveh is said to have contained enough vacant ground within its walls to produce sufficient corn for the population, and food for the cattle, to enable the inhabitants to stand a siege of several years' duration without much inconvenience to man or beast. Now, it must be admitted, that it required a large and pretty fertile piece of ground to produce sufficent food to keep from one to two million human beings, and, perhaps, one hundred thousand head of cattle, comfortably, for even one year. But even without reference to the above, I am inclined to believe that the extent of Nineveh, though, perhaps, not quite so immense as might be supposed on reading Jonah's description of the city, considerably exceeded sixty miles; for there can scarcely be a doubt that the front or river side of the city extended, at the least, from the mound of Konyimjik to that of Selamiyah, if not as far as Nimrod, a distance of nearly thirty miles; and if the mound of Khōrsabad (about twelve miles northeast of Mossul) and the mound of Kharamles (about fifteen miles northeast of Nimrod) formed the two rear corners of the quadrangular city, which we have every reason to believe that they did, we come to the conclusion that Nineveh measured at least seventy-five miles in circuit.

The original Nineveh, said by Greek historians to have had a circumference of only about nine miles, is universally believed to have occupied the centre of the subsequent mammoth city.

As to the buildings of Nineveh, they are supposed to have consisted chiefly of kiln-burnt bricks; at least the palaces discovered by Botta and Layard appear to have had brick walls fully fifteen feet thick, and to

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have been built upon huge platforms or pleateaux of pounded or stamped earth, raised about forty feet above the level of the plain. Magnificent archways formed the entrances of these palaces, and huge sphinxes (stone or metal figures of wild animals—lions and bulls—with human heads) occupied both sides of the entrance to the archways. The palaces contained few but large and lofty apartments, the sides of which were lined with gypsum and alabaster slabs, eight to ten feet high, by three to four feet broad, and from one to one and a half feet in thickness, all of them covered with bas-reliefs, representing scenes and episodes of war and peace, chiefly the former, with a description at the foot of each bas-relief, written in the characters of the language of that period. Even the floor throughout the building was laid with alabaster slabs similarly ornamented. The apartments on the ground floor were, moreover, decorated with ornaments of cedar-wood, enamel, ivory, bronze, etc., and appear to have all been destitute of windows, which seems to imply that they received the necessary light through apertures in the ceiling above, *i. e.*, through skylights, or, if the buildings were of more than one story, through openings in the floor of the second story. The ceiling of the apartments in the upper story or stories—if the Assyrians ever built edifices of two or more stories—must have been supported by columns, and served as balconies or as summer residences, in which case the rays of the sun and the gaze of outsiders could be excluded by the use of curtains or awnings. The description of these gorgeous palaces, together with the history of Assyria, as reported by the bas-reliefs excavated by the explorers, and deciphered by men of undoubted ability and authenticity, are almost of themselves sufficient proof that the Assyrians were for nearly six hundred and

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fifty years not only one of the most powerful nations of the then known world, but also with regard to civilization fully equal to any nation of their period.

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XX.

MOVING WESTWARD.

Present Complexion of the Caravan—Asleep in the Khan—A "Close Call"—Tricks of the "Hangers-on"—Scenery in a Gorge—Lachu—Pesireh—An Adventure—The "Errant Knight."

The day fixed for the departure of our caravan from Mossul arrived; we were to start by ten o'clock in the morning, and I had as yet no horse to carry me on my journey, for poor Felix, my young chesnut stallion from Bagdad, had not yet recovered from the effects of that unfortunate boar-hunt on the plains between Karatepi and Kifsi. From that very morning the poor horse's condition began rapidly to decline; he grew leaner and weaker day by day, and it soon became evident that I should have to leave him in Mossul, in the charge of my host, Mr. W., who kindly promised to take care of him, and to send him back to my friends in Bagdad, if he should recover, and to provide him with "a hunter's grave," if he should die. During my seven years of travel in Egypt, India, Madagascar, South Africa, Persia, Arabia, Mesopotamia, Syria, Asia Minor, etc., etc., I had mounted and owned a goodly number of excellent horses, and a few bad ones; but I never felt so much attached to any of them, as I did to poor Felix. I felt as if my heart would break, when the noble animal, with sorrowful eye, licked my forehead, as I patted him on the shoulders for the last time. Many weeks elapsed, before Felix was strong enough to be sent by caravan to Bagdad, and for a short time he was even daily expected to leave for the "happy hunting-grounds;" but fate would have him

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live to return to the "city of the caliphs," where, as I heard shortly afterwards, he was doing well and the favorite of his new proprietor—a German mining engineer, employed by the Turkish government to search for coal and explore other mines in the province of Irak Arabi.

A very strong bay horse, which belonged to a horse-dealer of Mossul, and which I had mounted on my rambles over Nineveh, had proved himself to be an indefatigable traveller; and, though rather vicious with his teeth and hind-legs and by no means a beauty, he became my property that morning, and consequently had the unspeakable honor of carrying me from Mossul to the genial shores of the Mediterranean Sea, a distance of about four-hundred and fifty miles, which feat he accomplished to my entire satisfaction. An hour after my purchase, I rode, in company with my host and the horse-dealer, into the khan which Signor P. occupied with his caravan. Though it was as yet hardly eight o'clock in the morning, a motley crowd had already assembled in the spacious court-yard, one corner of which was occupied by the numerous pack-horses of our caravan, about to be loaded by our men, who were much impeded in their duty by the numerous lookers-on, crowding around them, anxious to witness the departure of the "Frankies."

The remainder of the court-yard was teeming with horse-dealers and horse-owners of Arab, Turkish and Persian nationality, whose grooms cantered a great many horses in all directions over the spacious court, yard, much to the peril of life and limb of themselves and the spectators, and amidst the vociferous neighing of our groop of blood-horses in the stables close by.

We found Signor P. in his usual good humor, standing at the entrance of the stables busily engaged

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in giving his various orders to the Arabs of our caravan, and, at the same time, keeping a watchful eye upon the horses cantering about the court-yard. It was evident that he did not much fancy any of these animals, as on observing our arrival he gave the horse-dealers by a motion of his hand to understand that he did not want any of their stock, whereupon they, with a civil salaam, quietly withdrew. Signor P. then informed us that Pasha, the governor, was still very wroth that he, Signor P., persisted in refusing to buy his (the Pasha's) horse, for the reasons previously mentioned, and that the Pasha meant to behave meanly by him, by not furnishing us in time with the necessary escort as directed by a "firman," of which Signor P. was the bearer. Signor P., tired of waiting for the escort to be furnished by the Pasha, and determined not to be baffled by the arbitrary Turk, resolved to start without the escort, confident that we could do without it, especially as he had concluded to travel only by day. We had now already reached a latitude where caravans can travel without much inconvenience from the heat of the sun, even during the hottest part of the day, especially from the beginning of October to the end of March.

The order to start had hardly been given, when our caravan, being all ready, marched out of the gates of the khan, in Indian file. First the pack-horses, heavily laden with our goods and chattels, creating a deafening noise by the tinkling of the numerous bells dangling from the neck of each horse or mule. The Spanish muleteer as well as the Persian mukāree, would no more think of travelling without this monotone music than a sea captain would without a compass, and give as a reason that neither pack-horse nor mule travel nearly as well without bells. Our batch of horses had

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during their five days rest at Mossul regained all their spirit and playfulness, and behaved as unmanageably as they did when they left Bagdad; but our men, having become thoroughly acquainted with their "carambols," soon reduced them to obedience. Crowds of the inhabitants of Mossul gathered as we crossed the Tigris bridge, and swerved off to the left, taking the road leading between the river Tigris and the northwest limits of the ruins of Nineveh, towards "Sācho," a small town some sixty miles north-northwest of Mossul. My host, Mr. W., accompanied us for a considerable distance; but, finally taking leave of us, struck across the barren, undulating country on our right, towards a little Arab village. He was mounted on a magnificent and immensely powerful chesnut stallion, which up to the time of our leaving Mossul had formed part of our batch of select horses, and had been purchased in Hillah, near the ruins of Babylon, by Signor P., for his own use, but exchanged with Mr. W. for a bay horse. Mr. W. soon disappeared from our sight, and we found ourselves alone, journeying towards the distant Mediterranean.

Father M., the young Catholic priest, had recruited his strength during our sojourn at Mossul, by restricting his diet to plenty of mutton chops and gallons of imported claret, of which latter commodity he had taken a good supply when he left his good and hospitable clerical brothers at Mossul. As for the negro girl Bahri, whether inspired by the rudiments of Christianity imparted to her by the sisters of charity, or whether the donkey she rode had become more spirited by his rest at Mossul, I am unable to say; but certain I am that she kept the lead of our caravan till we reached Sācho. Two badly armed and worse mounted saptiēchs (irregular cavalry) overtook us shortly after our parting

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with Mr. W., and proved to be the escort sent us by the Pasha, who, probably afraid that Signor P. would expose his conduct at headquarters, had sent them after us, with orders to conduct us to Sācho, to Nisibin, or even as far as Mardin. As the sequel will show, we got along well enough without them, and but for useless offence, Signor P. would have sent them directly back to Mossul.

After journeying for nearly three hours across the barren and apparently uninhabited plain, we reached a wretched little village composed of about a dozen low, square, flat-roofed huts built of sun-dried clay or mud, and situated on the south side of one of the many low hills scattered over the plain. This miserable village is called Tell Keif, and is situated about twelve miles from Mossul. Here Signor P. ordered a halt for two or three hours, intending to continue our journey in the more genial atmosphere of the evening, for the day had turned out rather sultry for that season of the year. Our horses were soon picketed and provided with food and water, whereupon all the members of the caravan, with the exception of two or three of the grooms—who were ordered to keep watch over the horses—retired to rest, part of the men securing some shady spot outside, and others retiring into some of the nearest huts. Signor P., Father M., myself, Bahri, and our cook Joseph, an Armenian, took possession of the hut nearest to our horses, occupied up to the time of our arrival only by an old lady and a squealing baby, the latter being swung to and fro in a little straw mat suspended by two strings from the top of the hut. The old lady, well knowing that she would be the recipient of "bakshish" (a present, gratuity), offered to withdraw and spend the afternoon in some other hut in the village with her child; but as the little creature had

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stopped squealing, we did not object to her remaining. We spread blankets on the ground, shut the door to keep out the hot wind, and were soon asleep in the pitch-dark room.

During the entire journey from Bagdad to the Mediterranean Sea, I had carried my money in a little leather satchel suspended by a strap from my shoulder, and always took good care to stow it away, together with my fire-arms and hunting-knife, under my pillow, before going to rest. Much to my regret and inconvenience, my hunting-knife disappeared mysteriously the first night we passed in Karkuk. I was afraid that my gun, revolver, and money might vanish in the same manner; so I took every precaution to protect them. Fire-arms and money certainly form the most essential part of a traveler's equipment in a semi-civilized country, and, when once lost, cannot be easily replaced, especially in Mesopotamia. I had slept soundly for about three hours, when I awoke. Instinctively I looked for the things I had stowed away under my head. I missed the satchel of money; thought it advisable, however, not to make any outcry about it, but informed Signor P. of my loss. He was astonished and said that no one could have entered the room, as he had bolted the door himself on the inside and had not slept a quarter of an hour since. He also said that he would answer for the honesty of all the occupants of the hut, except the old Arab woman. In consequence of our conversation, I charged the old woman with the theft, and, to frighten her, told her coolly that if the money was not returned at once I would set fire to the hut. She screamed, and lamented, and wept, and declared her innocence; but I knew too well the character of these natives to put much faith in her protestations. Meantime the news of my loss had reached those outside,

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whereupon every member of our caravan declared his innocence, and so, of course, did all the inhabitants of the village. Father M. coolly remarked that I unjustly accused any one of theft, as I had lost the bag on the road, and got into such a hot altercation with me that he threatened to shoot me, and, suiting the action to the word, presented his revolver. This outrageous conduct of a man teaching religion and forbearance so incensed me that, with my left hand, I sent the pistol flying, and followed it up by knocking him down with my right. On turning round, I saw two men of the village escaping from the grasp of Signor P. and bolt from the village. In the firm belief that Signor P. had discovered the thieves, I started in pursuit of the fugitives, followed by two or three of our men.

I don't know whether it was from a feeling of revenge or excitement which gave me more than ordinary speed, but certain it is that I leaped over the ground with the agility of an antelope, leaving my party a long way behind. I soon noticed that the strength of one of the fugitives gave way, as I gained upon him at every stride, and a moment after I pinioned him to the ground. He yelled in deadly fear that I was going to kill him. Quite absorbed in holding the writhing, half-naked wretch, I did not notice that his companion had returned to his rescue, and had already raised his long, glittering knife to plunge it between my shoulders—when, crash! he fell prostrate by my side. Mahomed Abdallah, the most sturdy of our "saïs" (grooms), who had gone with me in pursuit of the two fugitives, came up just in time to prevent the fellow stabbing me, by knocking him senseless with a stone.

Our two antagonists turned out to be quite innocent of the theft, and had taken to their heels merely from fear that Signor P. was going to beat them, as he went

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up to them during my altercation with the priest. On our return to the village, we found Signor P. surrounded by a dense crowd of men, women and children. He was holding fast to one of our men, while two others searched the pockets of the suspected individual, who was ghastly pale and trembling like a leaf. When the wretched man saw me, he begged to speak with me in private. I took him behind the hut, when he confessed his guilt; he said that he had stowed himself away in a dark corner of the hut before we entered it, and waited quietly till we were all asleep, when, noiselessly on all fours, he crept towards me, and, imitating a fly passing across my face, by tickling me with a blade of straw, he succeeded in disturbing me enough to turn over, whereby he was enabled to draw the satchel gently from under the blanket. Returning with his booty to his hiding-place, he attempted to open the satchel, but it was locked and I had the key; so he simply ripped open the seam of the satchel with his knife, abstracting its contents, which, together with the satchel, he buried in a dark corner of the hut.

The suspicion of the theft fell upon him rather accidentally, through the negro girl Bahri, who after we had all left the hut had occasion to return to it for the purpose of getting some water to drink, while fumbling for the big earthen water-jug usually to be found in one corner of these dark huts, she discovered to her astonishment the prostrate form of this young fellow in the darkest corner of the hut feigning to be asleep. In order to make him believe that she did not notice him, she continued to fumble about the dark room, and finally glided out of the hut bolting the door after her. She immediately gave notice of her discovery and suspicion to Signor P., who unceremoniously dragged the villian out of the hut. He promised

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to return everything he had stolen from me, if I would protect him from Signor P., and the men of our caravan. I promised to do so, when he conducted me into the hut and to the corner where he had lain concealed, then he knelt down and dug with his hands in the sandy ground and brought to light the empty satchel, ripped open at the bottom. Some feet distant from this hole he dug another one, and unearthed the contents of the satchel. On counting my money I found the amount incorrect, but he swore that he had buried it just as he took it from the satchel.

Signor P., incensed at this barefaced lie, could not refrain from boxing the fellows ears, and thereby knocked off the turban of the culprit, which in falling to the ground displayed the missing money. The fury of our men, as well as of the inhabitants of the village, on many of whom the grave suspicions of the theft had rested, knew on bounds. In spite of my endeavors to protect him, they crowded around the helpless wretch, and belabored him terribly, and would probably have killed him outright, if Signor P., Father M., and myself had not finally succeeded in breaking through the crowd and threatened to shoot the first who should strike the miserable man again. After this occurrence Signor P. could not, of course, permit the culprit to accompany the caravan, especially since he proved to be a professional thief, having confessed, also, to the theft of my hunting-knife. Signor P. was anxious to get rid of the zaptïchs as well as the robber, and very shrewdly thought this a splendid opportunity to "kill two birds with one stone." He therefore ordered the zaptïchs to return to Mossul with the prisoner and deliver him to the Pasha, who should punish him according to the crime. They forthwith immediately mounted their horses and returned to

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Mossul, the prisoner marching between them with a rope tied around his loins, the other end of which was attached to the saddle-girth of one of the horses.

For a long distance we could see the prisoner still marching steadily between his escorts, but we finally lost sight of the trio. I have not the slightest doubt, however, that they reached Mossul in safety; but I have good reason to doubt that the prisoner ever was accused before the Pasha, but was rather on the best of terms with the men as soon as they left us; the leading of the prisoner being mere sham, only to deceive us, and was undoubtedly done away with as soon as they got out of sight; theft not being considered by these natives a crime, if the theft is not detected, and especially if a giasur (infidel or Christian) has been victimized. This fellow was young, handsome and intelligent, and had left Bagdad with our caravan, pretending to be bound for Diarbekir. He was not in our employ, but merely traveled under the protection of our caravan, as it is customary in that part of the world, when single solitary travelers, who have to journey through a territory notorious for highway robberies, generally await the departure of a caravan which is proceeding in their direction, which they join, and travel under its protection. Many of these "travelers" are, however, nothing but professional thieves, who join and travel with caravans merely for the sake of plunder. To insure success in their villainous plans, they usually make themselves very useful, being always ready to assist in loading and unloading camels, packhorses and mules, for the sole purpose of learning the value and position of the luggage and merchandise, specie, and other valuables, and the best means to abstract them. Many of these individuals are in direct connection with gangs of highwaymen, etc., and act as

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spies for them. A well-known dodge of theirs is to offer their services to caravans, as *aghels* or zapticbs, whose duty it is to protect caravans on the journey, and keep watch over the camp at night. As escort they generally bring up the rear; they profit by this opportunity, especially when the caravans travel at night, and even by day, when passing through a mountain gorge, through underwood, or over deep sand, and, at their convenience, adroitly cut through, or half through, the ropes with which the luggage or goods are bound to the pack-saddles of the camels, horses or mules. The trunk, box, bale, or bag, drops to the ground instantly, or otherwise, according to the cut in the rope, when it is at once hidden in the brush-wood, or buried in the deep sand, either by themselves or their accomplices, who are generally not far distant. By the time the loss is discovered, the villains have either decamped, or are too well hidden and are already miles off. A favorite dodge is acting in the capacity of spies for highwaymen or marauders, and while, with apparent curiosity examining the fire-arms of the other members of the caravan, or while the latter are asleep, fill the nipples and touch-holes with wooden or leaden plugs to render them useless. To be brief, the tricks and dodges, employed by these vagabonds, are so numerous, and so ingenious that a caravan has to be careful who is admitted to its protection.

Shortly after the two zapticbs had left with the prisoner, we resumed our journey after amply indemnifying the old lady whose hut we had occupied and whom we had unjustly accused. We traveled briskly till about a half an hour after sunset, when we reached a little village the name of which I have forgotten. Its inhabitants had already retired to the flat roofs of their huts, where the females were busily engaged in spread-

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ing the carpets and straw mats which serve these natives as bedding. Our unexpected arrival of course caused quite a commotion among these people, and especially among the curs of the village, which struck up a deafening noise by their furious barking, till forcibly silenced by a few well-directed missiles thrown by the villagers.

After a futile search in the village for a vacant space of ground large enough for our caravan, we withdrew and picketed our horses outside of the place. In a wonderfully short time the tent was pitched, and almost simultaneously our various camp-fires illuminated the suburbs of the village, which was already wrapped up in the shadows of the night.

An hour afterwards the occasional snort of a horse, the challenge of our watchman, and the distant howl of a prowling jackal, answered by the angry barking of a village dog, were the only sounds of life. Everybody seemed to enjoy an excellent rest till towards daybreak, when the vociferous crowing of numberless cocks, and anything but melodious braying of about a dozen donkeys, heralded the coming day and produced a lively stir in our camp and the village.

The first rays of a magnificent sunrise found us already on the march across a very fertile, but to all appearance, an uncultivated plain, scattered over which we espied numbers of beautiful gazelles, many of them within a few hundred yards of our track, quietly nibbling the weeds and shrubs, and not at all shy, as they scarcely lifted their heads to look at us as we passed. Their indifference to our presence hurt my pride considerably, and I resolved to profit by their recklessness. For this purpose I cantered about a mile ahead of our caravan, intending to keep up that distance from it till I had had a shot at my game. I had not proceeded

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far, when I noticed about half a mile ahead of me five of the gazelles, a little at the right of our track, slowly walking in Indian-file in the direction of Sacho. I had kept my eyes steadily upon them, when suddenly they were lost to view, one after the other, as if they were sinking one by one into the ground. This circumstance proved to me that they had descended into a ravine as yet invisible to me, perhaps for the purpose of crossing to the other side, as it is not the habit of gazelles to drink after sunrise.

There was no time to be lost. I knew well it would not do to canter up to the edge of the ravine, as the alert creatures would have heard and felt the jarring of the ground by my horse's hoofs and taken to flight. To prevent this, I dismounted, threw the reins on the ground (the usual mode of the Boers and hunters of South Africa, when they wish their horses to graze, and consequently remain quiet till they return and resume their seat in the saddle), ran as fast as my legs would carry me to the spot where the gazelles had disappeared, and then cautiously approached them on all fours. On peeping over I saw them crossing a brooklet at the bottom of the ravine. Taking a steady aim, I fired both barrels and sent one of the leaders struggling into the water. The effect of the surprise of the gazelles was amusing to witness. Almost simultaneously with the detonation of the shots, the uninjured gazelles jumped fully four feet into the air, and splashed back again into the water, two of them missing their footing and rolling in the water. In an instant, however, they recovered their foothold and dashed wildly up the less steep opposite bank. Anxious lest my still struggling and splashing gazelle should regain its feet, I hurried down the ravine, and by the time I reached the gazelle she had ceased struggling, and I had no difficulty in carry-

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ing her on my shoulder through the shallow water and up the ravine. On the arrival of the caravan, Signor P. ordered a short halt to enable Yoosoooff, the cook, to skin and cut up the game, after which we continued our journey pleasantly until we reached the foot of a high and densely wooded mountain chain which stretches from the Tigris in a due easterly direction to the frontier of Persia. The road to Zachu, or Sacho, leads straight across the mountain range, intersected by deep mountain gorges, with almost perpendicular sides, at the bottom of which ran small but rapid torrents. The road itself looks rather like the dry bed of a mountain torrent, owing to its being strewn with rocks and boulders, some of which are of prodigious size and weight; in fact the road leads across the bare rock, a sort of light gray granite, as hard as flint and in many places as smooth and slippery as ice. This road is in my estimation the worst I ever saw on the western boundary, except the one which leads across Oofa, the ancient Edessa, a town between Birehjik and Suverick (Upper Euphrates).

In many places there were distinct impressions, many inches deep, of horse's feet imprinted in the solid granite, a clear proof that the passage was so difficult, that for centuries every horse had been obliged to step exactly in the footsteps of its predecessor in order to pass over the difficult point. Aside from this the scenery in this Oriental mountain gorge was charmingly romantic. The steep sides of the gorge were covered with an almost impenetrable thicket of underwood in which I noticed numerous wild apple and cherry trees, a kind of wild plum, walnut trees, hazelnut bushes, gall-nut bushes, vines, lianas, prickly pears, cacti, and numerous bushes with berries and aromatic blossoms. After a mile or two the road became more

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even, larger trees were more abundant, and when we had nearly reached the foot of the mountain, we found the little town of Zachu prettily ensconced at the mouth of the gorge, partly encircled by a beautiful little river, the fertile and lovely banks of which were lined with females in gaudy Oriental costume busily engaged in carrying the pure, crystal water into the town, while merrily laughing and chatting; the whole scene was one of happiness. As usual, our caravan created quite a sensation among the inhabitants who crowded around us and followed us from street to street as we went in search of a suitable khan for our reception. But we soon found that there was not a building in Zachu large enough to contain the caravan, and as level ground was equally scarce within the precincts of the little town, we forded the stream and encamped on a smooth piece of ground on the opposite bank not more than three hundred yards from the town. As soon as the horses were picketed, the pack-horses unloaded, and our tent pitched, the greater part of our men recrossed the river for the purpose of buying provisions, of which, especially of fruit, they bought a large quantity for a mere trifle. Almost all Orientals have an aversion, more or less, to animal food, and consequently live chiefly on vegetable matter, such as rice, onions, cucumbers, bread, and fruit of every kind. Of fruit, especially, they can consume large quantities, apparently without any bad effect, and though they almost invariably eat their fruit and vegetables raw. I have seen our men eat nothing for days but watermelons, sometimes one single man consuming one of from ten to fifteen pounds weight, at one meal, a feat which might prove fatal to any one unaccustomed to such diet. The only meat sold in bazaars in the most of Oriental cities is mutton, goat's meat, game, fowl and

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occasionally fish and camel meat, most of which is used by the wealthier classes, though it is by no means beyond the reach of the poor to purchase animal food; but as I have stated they prefer to subsist chiefly on delicious grapes, figs, peaches, oranges, water and sugar- or mush-melons, cucumbers, etc., which are so abundant and cheap in some places in Upper Mesopotamia, especially in Zachu. With the fine fat gazelle which I had secured on the road, and a good supply of domestic meat and fowl procured in Zachu, and an abundance of groceries we carried with us, our cook was able to get up an excellent dinner for us, after which Signor P. and myself repaired to town, fording the river on the backs of two of our men, for the purpose of recruiting our supply of wine and "arak" (brandy distilled from dates, tasting something like absinthe).

We found that the town bad been formerly well fortified, but the greater part of the fortifications are now level with the ground; only two large, round unsightly towers remain, one serving as the office of the Kaímakam, the other as a prison.

Zachu sports a little bazaar chiefly occupied by Christians and Jews, who form the greater part of a population of about four thousand inhabitants; the Mohammedans numbering about one thousand. We found the inhabitants remarkably intelligent and tidy in their dress and appearance, especially the women, who dress almost coquettishly and are quite famous throughout Upper Mesopotamia for their good looks, which reputation they undoubtedly merit, as they are gifted with finely cut Oriental features, a peculiarly healthy, rosy color, and a much gayer disposition than is usual with Eastern females.

About sunrise next morning we resumed our journey, marching in a northwesterly direction across a

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beautiful fertile plain alive with gazelles. Signor P. and I tried several times to get a fair shot, but they were too shy and took to flight before we could get within three hundred yards of them. However, we shot a good many pin-tailed sand grouse, which soared in dense masses like an immense cloud over the plains. One who has not been an eye-witness cannot form any adequate idea of the number of these birds on the plaine of Mesopotamia. They exist there in millions upon millions. I have often seen them passing from ons hundred to five hundred feet above our heads in such immense numbers as to make them appear like a vast cloud driven by a hurricane, and actually excluding the sun, while they passed above us. Their approach can be heard at the distance of a mile or more, owing to a peculiar noise produced by the velocity with which they dart through the air, and by the quick flapping of their wings, which produces a noise strongly resembling the sound of a strong wind blowing through a forest. They always travel in masses together, rise and settle together, and generally keep on the wing during the hottest part of the day, soaring over the almost endless barren plains. Before sunrise, and after sunset, they are never seen moving unless disturbed; but are closely congregated on some sandy or gravelly piece of ground. When so settled, it is very difficult to approach them while the sun is still visible; but before sunrise and after sunset one may with a little discretion easily approach within one hundred yards of them before they rise.

The morning of our departure from Zachu was not very bright; the sun disappeared behind some heavy clouds, and it soon began to rain so hard that every member of the caravan was drenched to the skin before we reached the next village. A cold north wind

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sprang up, and caused us all to shiver in our wet clothes. About an hour before noon we arrived at a small village called Rābāhi, which luckily sported a khan or caravansary sufficiently large to afford shelter to the whole caravan, and where we resolved to await a change of weather. An hour or two after our arrival at the village the rain ceased, the sky cleared up, and the sun re-appeared, enabling us to dry our clothes. The road, or rather track, had also been rendered very slippery and difficult by the rain, and we concluded not to travel any further that day.

The following morning broke with every sign of a rainy day; however we resumed our journey, owing to the scantiness of food for man and beast. Our way led over a very undulating country apparently fertile, but almost uninhabited. We had proceeded but a few miles, when a drizzling rain began to fall, and continued to do so until nearly noon. While gently jogging up one of the low hills across which our path led us, we were startled by the sudden appearance of about a dozen gazelles dashing across our path, only about two hundred yards ahead of us, hotly pursued by eight savage looking greyhounds. A moment after, four native horsemen, shaggy-bearded, bare-footed, and clad in tattered garments, made their appearance, thundering past us in the track of the gazelles and hounds, along the ridge of the low hill; but gazelles, hounds, and horsemen went on at such a tremendous rate of speed that we soon lost sight of them on the underlating plain, and never heard the result of the chase.

Soon after meeting with the gazelle hunters, we reached an old, abandoned Turkish castle or fort, built on a rock slightly projecting into the river Tigris, and surrounded by a garden or park in which were rose,

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jessamine, oleander, pomegranate, and orange bushes in full blossom, but overgrown with a profusion of climbers and other parasitical plants which, together with the dilapidated walls of the building densely overgrown with ivy, gave evidence that the castle had long been uninhabited.

From this locality our path led us close by the side of the river till we arrived opposite Tesīreh, our next halting place. To our agreeable surprise the whole caravan crossed the rickety, wooden bridge in safety. Signor P. finding that, owing to the bad repute of the inhabitants, it was advisable not to enter the town with the caravan, selected a suitable spot for our camp on the south side of the town walls, where we arrived just at noon. The drizzling rain that had fallen all the morning had ceased by this time, and the sun shone down upon our camp, from the clouded sky, with right good will, and rendered the atmosphere, which a few hours before was chilly, quite oppressive.

Having been descried by the armed men standing guard at the different gates of the town walls, while we were yet on the opposite side of the river, our arrival was generally known before we had barely pitched our tent, and our camp was soon surrounded by a crowd of eager spectators of the male sex, while the more timid females peeped down upon us from the top of the town walls near us, as well as from the flat roofs of their dwellings.

Leaving orders with our men to keep a good look-out, and to allow no one to approach too close to our camp, Signor P. and myself, accompanied by our sturdy Saïs Abadallah and the cook, Yoossooff, proceeded to town to buy provisions. We went straightway to the bazaar, which we found crowded with people; well-dressed men in Turcoman costume, with

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quite a collection of daggers and pistols in their belts and scarfs, and heavy scimetars dangling from their loins, giving their bearers more the aspect of bandits, and bravoes, than of peaceable people; bare-footed Bedouins dressed in coarse, brown woolen garments, shaggy haired, wild featured, and inseparable from their long, sharp pointed lances; bareheaded and barefooted females, clad only in a loose, long woolen shirt of dark red, or dark blue color; half-naked negroes, ragamuffins, and beggars; camels, horses, donkeys, and half-starved dogs without number, thronged through the narrow, crooked, and wretchedly paved lanes of the bazaars in utter confussion. Excessively thronged as was the bazaar, equally abandoned and desolate was the rest of the town's thoroughfares, where a few girls carrying large earthen water-urns on their shoulders, a couple of naked urchins playing in the dusty lanes, a bevy of lean fowl, or an invalid dog, or decrepit donkey, were the only signs of life and habitation.

The houses and streets we found to be much like those throughout Mesopotamia. "Jesîreh-ebn-Omar" (*i. e.*, the island of the son of Omar) is a fortified town containing at the present time from ten to twelve thousand inhabitants, though it appears to have been far more numerously populated in earlier days, judging from the fact that a great many houses are uninhabited, and partially in ruins. The fortifications are also in a very poor state of preservation, and numberless well-tenanted stork's nests occupy the pinnacles of the numerous "lookout" towers and minarets of the place. Certainly, most positive proof that the thunder of gunpowder and the noise of war have not been heard there for many years.

On returning to camp, we found everything in good order, and our men in the best of humor, because

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they had succeeded in drying all the garments saturated by the morning's rain. Towards evening I went out for a stroll along the banks of the river to enjoy a refreshing bath. While going round one of the sand-hills which border the river below the town I unexpectedly confronted about twenty females of all ages, some of whom were standing in extreme negligé on the river brink, while others were splashing about in the waters of the beautiful Tigris.

Not all the females living on the banks of the Tigris are so delicate in this respect as the belles of Jesīreh. It is customary among the women and girls of the Bedouins encamped during the dry season along the river banks, between Mossul and Bagdad, to watch the kēlēcks (rafts) floating down the river, when, as soon as they espy one of them, numbers of them rush to the river side with a wooden bowl of "lāban" (curd or sour milk), or "dood" (fresh milk), or a basket of eggs in one hand and an inflated "*toolooch*" (ch as in loch-lake) or bag of goat's-skin in the other, and wait till the kēleck has floated down nearly opposite them, when they all plunge into the river, each holding her inflated "toolooch" under her left *arm*, firmly, as a buoy, and the milk or eggs in her left hand, while she uses the right in paddling (as she also uses her feet), and goes right out into the middle of the stream. Surrounding the kēlēck on all sides, they offer the milk or eggs to the occupants of the raft for sale for a few coppers or trifles, and will even climb aboard, if allowed to do so, which, by-the-by, it is bad policy to permit. Besides being bold, they all suffer more or less from kleptomania, and the indiscreet passengers are likely to find themselves minus all sorts of objects after these water nymphs have left the kēlēck. In the spring of 1865, while I was traveling in company with

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Mr. J., a young countryman of mine, in one of these kēlēcks, from Diarbekir to Bagdad, our craft was repeatedly surrounded by these amphibious females, of whom we bought our regular supply of sour milk, eggs, fowls, etc., but we took good care never to allow them to climb aboard; yet they did manage to steal from us two live fowls which were quietly strolling about the kēlēck, and sundry other articles at hand.

During the night of our encampment at Jesīreh a a terrific thunder and rain storm raged about midnight, threatening to destroy our new tent. Peal after peal of thunder rolled over our camp, and echoed with terrific power along the river banks; the rain fell in torrents, and every few seconds the dark firmament was for an instant illuminated by the blinding flashes of lightning, which darted out of the black electric clouds to the ground, invariably and instantaneously followed by deafening detonations of the thunder. I could not refrain from pitying our poor men, who, wrapped from head to foot in their "abbas" (thin woolen cloaks) and shivering with cold and fear, were exposed to the weather outside the tent; but the greater part of our luggage had to be protected under the tent, and occupied all the space underneath those frail sheets. The horses, though, like the men, unaccustomed to such rough weather, stood the storm bravely, and remained as quiet as lambs. Fortunately it soon abated, and our men rose and managed to kindle and keep up a jolly good fire till daybreak.

The rising sun inspired with new life and vigor both man and beast, and by seven o'clock in the morning we were in the saddle again bound for Arnooz or Ernooz, a little village about half way between Jesīreh and Nisibin, about twenty-five miles west of Jesīreh. Anxious to secure some game for our empty larder, I

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rode on in advance of the caravan, and had traveled but a few miles, when I saw about a mile ahead of me a solitary horseman proceeding in our direction. At first this vexed me a little, because there was no chance of coming across any game as long as this fellow kept ahead of me, so I started my horse into an easy canter, and as I shortened the distance to the stranger, I saw that he was badly mounted, the animal he bestrode being a small and fearfully lean pony staggering painfully along over the rugged ground. In fact, on closer approach, horse and rider elicited a smile, as I thought of the picture of Don Quixote, "the errant knight," on his emaciated steed, "Rosinante." On coming up to the stranger (who was, by the way, a short, thick-set man of about forty-five years, whose face was three-quarters overgrown by a jet black beard utterly neglected, while his person was arrayed in a Turkish costume, or rather in half Turkish, half European, and armed with a heavy scimitar), I felt confident that he was an Osmanli (Turk), but not being able to accost him in his mother tongue, I saluted him in Arabic. I was not a little taken aback by being answered in good English. Expressing my surprise at this, he quietly unbuttoned the old threadbare Turkish military coat he wore, and displayed two medals, one a Turkish brass, and the other the well-known British silver medal of the Crimean war. Traveling slowly on with me, he related a variety of incidents of the various battles of the Crimea in which he had participated, and showed me two ugly scars which he said he had received at the assault and capture of the tower of Malakoff, and loudly praised the exploits of the French and English at Balaklava, Inkerman, on the Alma, etc., etc. It appears that the composed and quiet manner of the English was more congenial to the stern Mussulman than

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the mercurial disposition of the French, and he candidly acknowledged that he always preferred the society of the former, in whom he became so interested that he learned to converse in English, of which accomplishment he was unspeakably proud. On inquiring, he told me that he had been in service of the commander of the garrison, at Karkuk, in the capacity of cavass (armed servant) for a term of nearly ten years; but getting tired of the position had given it up, and was now on his way home to his native place, Stambul (Constantinople). On my asking him, in a jocose way, if he were ashamed of his medals, since he wore them on the inside of his coat, he gave me such a look! but knowing that I said it jestingly, he replied that he did so to avoid the covetousness of thieves and highwaymen. His pluck, in traveling alone, and badly mounted and equipped, in a country so notorious for its lawlessness, as well as his frankness and good humor, and pity for the poor emaciated nag he rode (for which he said he had paid two Turkish lires—nine dollars—cash down), induced me to offer him the protection of our caravan, which I told him was pursuing the same route he was, till we came near Constantinople. He "jumped at the chance," and I gave up the idea of looking for game, and proposed to him to slacken our horses' pace, in order to let the caravan overtake us, when I would introduce him to our traveling companions. Signor P. was pleased with our new acquaintance, and gave him position as cavass of our caravan, which entitled Mohammed (his name), as well as his horse, to share the rations of our men and beasts, which were liberally distributed. In a few days, man and beast looked considerably more comfortable than when I picked them up. Mohammed proved very useful to our caravan, so much so that on our arrival at Iskanderoon (Alexan-

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dretta), Signor P. not only paid his passage to Constantinople, but made him a handsome present in Turkish gold.

The further we went towards our next halting place, Ernooz, the rougher and narrower became our path, so that before we reached that village, the whole country, as far as the eye could reach, was a mass of rugged rocks studding densely the country around, and giving it the appearance of an ocean covered with petrified waves.

For miles and miles, the tortuous path was hardly discernible amidst the sea of rocks, and so narrow that it was nearly impossible for a quadruped the size of a cow or a horse to place a foot on real soil, a fact which renders that part of the country most difficult and dangerous for man and horse to travel over. Yet it is the regular highway traveled by everybody bound from Mossul to Diarbekir (the Turkish mail carrier not excepted). Almost miraculously our whole caravan finally succeeded in reaching the little village above mentioned without accident, but Mohammed's poor nag had kept me all the way in a state of ferish excitement as he staggered along, not unlike a drunken man, and threatening at every step to fall to rise no more.

We found Ernooz to be composed of about a dozen miserable, low, flat-roofed hovels, the walls of which were constructed of stones and pieces of rock piled upon each other, the interstices being filled with clay mixed with a kind of moss and dry grass. Of course we had to picket our horses in the open air, as there was not a building in the place large enough to hold even a half a dozen horses. As luck would have it, there was an open space of ground in the village free of stone and large enough to accommodate the caravan. I did not succeed in ascertaining how the inhabitants of that

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village manage to live all the year round; for with the exception of a few miniature water melons, a couple of cucumbers and about twenty pounds of barley, there were absolutely no other provisions either visible or attainable in or around the miserable hamlet. Fortunately, we had taken with us from Jesireh, a good supply of barley for our horses, having been forewarned that that article would be very scarce between Jesireh and Nisibin. That circumstance enabled us to distribute some of the barley among the men who made it into bread.

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XXI.

ABOUT NISIBIN.

The Arab and the Frogs—Forward—At Nisibin—The Count's Encounter with Bedouins—Hammerdich—Received by the Sheik—"A Pearl"—Mardin Mountain in the Distance.

Our men, as well as the villagers, who noticed us splashing about in the mud and water, wondered what on earth we were doing there, and naturally went to the brooklet to see what we were about, and saw, to their unfeigned amazement and horror, "the queer Feringhies" (Franks or Europeans) hunting frogs. There they stood, with mouths and eyes wide open, gazing at us; but none stirred to help us, till Signor P., without looking up from his work, shouted "a kāmeri (one quarter Turkish piaster, equal to five-eighths of a cent American money) for every frog." This unexpected offer acted like magic on the lookers-on, and in a moment the brooklet was alive with frog hunters, old and young, male and female, most of whom, probably, had never intentionally touched a frog in their lives; and such an onslaught on the poor frogs never took place since the creation of that gentle stream. In less than fifteen minutes eighty-two ice-cold living frogs were imprisoned, struggling and wriggling in the bottom of a good sized forage-bag, and were transported forthwith on the back of one of our men to headquarters. There Signor P. (who, by-the-bye, like most of his countrymen, was an excellent gastronomist) commenced a terrible slaughter on them by decapitation, disembowelling and flaying one after the other, and finishing the job by throwing them into the frying-pan,

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which soon transmuted them into an excellent dish, far superior to any we had tasted on our journey through Mesopotamia; and even the scrupulous Arabs ventured to taste them, and, with a grin on their faces, pronounced them "ketêr tāyēb" (very good). Though there were frogs enough in the brooklet, we could hardly have induced our horses to feed on them if our supply of barley should become exhausted.

We, therefore, broke up our camp the next morning as soon as there was enough daylight to enable us, to resume our journey over the dreadfully stony and tiresome country, across which we had to travel so slowly, that we did not reach Nisibin (only twenty-two miles southwest of Ernooz) before two o'clock in the afternoon, for a wonder, without accident to man or beast. In order to give the reader a fair idea of the country we traveled over, I need only say that every one of our horses reached Nisibin, minus one, two, three and some even four shoes, a circumstance which compelled us to remain a day longer at Nisibin than we had intended, to enable Hadjee Mahommed, the little farrier whom Signor P. had hired in Mossul, to replace the lost shoes. Fortunately the khan we occupied was comparatively comfortable; the little town not uninteresting and the weather pleasant, so that we spent the time agreeably enough. Nisibin is a little town of about one thousand inhabitants, chiefly Moslems, Jews, and Christians (the latter numbering scarcely two hundred) The chief personage in the town is the Kaïmakam, an officer who throughout the Ottoman Empire enjoys as before stated the various dignities of mayor, judge, chief-of-police, and sometimes also that of postmaster of the place. The buildings of the town bear the usual Mesopotamian characteristics, and are without exception miserable dwellings. Like every other town in Western

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Asia, Nisibin has its bazaar, which, though of poor appearance compared with those of Bagdad and Mossul, is nevertheless well stocked with merchandise; the people of Nisibin doing considerable trade with the various wild Bedouin tribes who inhabit the desolate and parched plains of the upper section of El Jesīreh, or rather the arid territory south and southwest of Nisibin, with whom they exchange goods of Asiatic or European manufacture and produce for sheep's wool, goats' hair, skins, horses, cattle, etc. Nisibin lies at the confluence of two of the branches of a considerable river, called by the natives Hirmās, or Jāchjāchā, which is joined about forty miles south of Nisibin on the left bank by the many-armed river "Hassāwee" or "Hesāwí," as well as by two other smaller rivers, the latter originating in two small lakes, or rather swamps, at the foot of the northwestern slope of Jebl Sindshar (Sindshar Mountain). This mountain range is situated exactly in the centre of El Jesīreh, that vast desolate territory intervening between the rivers Tigris and Euphrates. From the southeastern slope of Jebl Sindshar, also, two rivers descend towards the basin of the Euphrates, which they finally join together with the Jāchjācha and Hesāwí, under the joint names of Chābur, at a point near the little village of Abu Saraï (father of Sarai or Sarah). Some geographers call another river originating in the Karadsha Dagh (a mountain chain lying between the two towns of Mardin and Suverek), Jachjacha, which is also supposed to be a tributary of the Chābur. Though few charts mention this river, there is no doubt of its existence and that it is considerably larger than either the Jāchjāchā or the Hesāwí. I am inclined to think that this river is nothing less than the real source of the Chābur itself. The interior of El Jesīreh, as well as the immense territory south of the Euphrates, is as

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yet but very imperfectly known to geographers and travelers, and has never been properly explored by any of them, owing no doubt to its extremely desolate character, and the very hostile disposition of the wild Bedouin tribes inhabiting that district. Their hostility is great towards all intruders, especially towards those who are not Moslems.

But to return to Nisibin. On the east side of the little town, where the soil can be flooded at will by means of sluices, there is a series of well-stocked gardens overshadowed by fine fruit and shade trees; the only vegetation visible around Nisibin as far as the eye can reach. At the south end of the town a stone bridge crosses one of the arms of the river. At this spot I amused myself for hours with fishing, and succeeded in hauling in several fine fish, a species of trout, out of the pure waters of the deep and rapid stream. Although now a very small town of scarcely two hundred houses, encircled by an old and shaky wall of stone, hardly twenty feet high, pierced by four gates, Nisibin evidently was once a much larger place, as its suburbs bear ample testimony of having formerly been densely covered with buildings (though at the present day they are utterly desolate), which circumstance appears to justify the supposition of some writers, that Nisibin occupies the very spot where stood Nisibis, the famous capital of Mygdonia, also known as Antiochea Mygdonia, referred to so often by historians in their reports of the wars between the Romans and Parthians. In the course of the afternoon of the second day of our sojourn, while Signor P. and I sat smoking and talking in a coffee-house of the little bazaar, we were informed by some of our men who had been loitering through the streets that an Arab merchant had just arrived in town from the interior of El Jesireh, and had brought

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the news that a caravan, headed by a Feringhee (Frank, European), accompanied by two Feringhee ladies, had been attacked three days previous to his arrival by a horde of mounted Bedouins, two days' journey west of Jebl Lindshar; but that after a sharp fight had got off with a loss of three men killed (one of them being the Feringhee himself), and several wounded, and that all the saddle horses had been taken off. There could be no question as to the identity of the caravan. It was Count de B.'s party which had so unceremoniously left us at Mossul. We were not surprised, but felt sincere regret for the tragical end of Count de B. and the unprotected condition of the ladies. Anxious to learn details, we dispatched one of our men with a friendly message to the Arab merchant, soliciting an interview with him at the coffee-house. He made his appearance without much delay. He was tall, athletic and sharp featured, of dark walnut complexion, and dressed in full Bedouin costume still covered with the dust of his journey. After the customary exchange of civilities and the serving of the usual "fenchân" (little cup) of coffee and "narghîleh" (water-bowl tobacco-pipe), he quietly and apparently very truthfully answered our questions, but with the characteristic reserve of the Arab. We felt, however, considerably relieved when on Signor P. asking him if he had himself seen the Feringhee's caravan either before or after the assault, he answered in the negative, saying that he had received his information from a Bedouin who wished to sell him a horse. The description he gave of the animal tallied exactly with that of one in Count de B.'s caravan, but then it might have been stolen in the same manner as my horse Felix on the plains below Kifri. Moreover, it was not at all likely that so large a force of well-mounted Bedouins, after killing the leader of

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the caravan, would have allowed the rest of the party to escape with their fine camels and valuables. As soon, therefore, as we found that our informant spoke only from hearsay, we discredited the truth of some of the news; of course, without letting the Arab know it, as he only professed to be repeating what he had really heard. He withdrew soon afterwards, and we talked the matter over among ourselves. We were aware of the tendency of the natives to exaggerate; nevertheless we could not doubt that some accident had given rise to the tale, while we did doubt the death of the Count and hoped to learn the truth on our arrival at Aleppo.

The following morning, we resumed our journey, re-inforced by four zaptiēhs whom the Kaïmakam of Nisibin advised us to take along as far as Hamudīeh or Amudīeh, a large village about sixteen miles north-west of Nisibin, as the road was not at all safe to travel, especially in small force, owing to a tribe of rapacious Bedouins being encamped on the desert south of Hamudīeh, who were without a doubt well informed, not only of our arrival, but also of the number and value of our horses, our men, their armament, and their own chances of success in case of an attack upon us; as they had reliable spies both in Nisibin and Hamudīeh.

In consequence of this information, we traveled in a compact body and kept a vigilant lookout as we marched over the parched and level, though no longer stony country, which on the north was bounded by the rocky desert of the district of Tur Abdin extending between the mountain region of Mardin and the right bank of the Tigris, while toward the south and west, it formed part of the smooth and endless plains of El Jesīreh. During that morning's march we repeatedly noticed in the distance suspicious looking horsemen, with long lances, in gangs of from three to six in num-

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ber, apparently traveling across the country, and though there were numbers of fine gazelles, wild pigs, and clouds of desert pigeons visible on the plain, I concluded that *this* time it was advisable to spare my ammunition and keep with the caravan.

We did not reach Hamudieh until noon, though we saw the large dark-gray village loom up far away on the flat and, to all appearance, perfectly barren plain while we were fully twelve miles off, and had it constantly before us till we finally arrived there. Conspicious among the buildings of the good-sized Arab villages is always the dwelling of the Sheikh (chief), which, though constructed like the other houses of the village, merely of sun-dried brick, was in this instance plastered over with a thick layer of mud, rendered more adhesive by being mixed with mashed or cut straw and camel's or cattle dung. As this seemed the only place in Hamudieh large enough to contain the whole of the caravan in its spacious court yard, and was the safest against intruders and thieves, we, as is customary in Mesopotamia and Arabia, made ourselves the guests of the Sheikh, a tall, powerful Arab of about forty years of age in elegant Arabian costume, which was evidently donned for the occasion; our host having had ample time to change his clothing, as he could see the caravan jogging along when many miles distant. He had on a large, fine, woolen gown of purple, over which he wore a sky-blue woolen abba (long, flowing cloak or mantle), his legs covered with a pair of red and white striped cotton trowsers gathered at the ankle in Moslem fashion, while his feet were encased in crimson colored leather shoes without heels and with upturned toes. In the white muslin scarf around his loins stuck the curved dagger, with silver mounted handle, worn by nearly all Arabs, and on his closely

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shaven head, he wore a huge snow-white turban, the distinction and sole privilege of the Hadji (pilgrim to Mecca). He was surrounded by his male friends (who were, however, dressed with considerably less show than their chief) in front of his house, deeply absorbed in contemplating the merits of our drove of horses; all the while mechanically passing through his fingers his chaplet (a string of large beads of amber, or glass, or other material resembling the Rosary used by Roman Catholics in their devotions), which nearly all Moslems possess, but used merely as toys or "pastimes." The Sheikh received us in the calm, dignified manner peculiar to the Arabs, and with the proverbal hospitality of his nation, and placed his whole house at our disposal, having previously sent his household to take up quarters with some of his friends or relatives in the village till we left. The apartment allotted to us was the Sheikh's state-room, a quadrangular chamber of about twenty feet by twelve facing the street. The walls of the room contained four small loopholes through which, and the constantly open doorway, the daylight was admitted into the apartment. The sides of the state-room were merely four plain mud walls entirely destitute of woodwork or other ornaments; the floor was covered with coarse but clean straw mats, and in one of the corners of the apartment were piled up the mattresses and pillows of the Sheikh's family left there for our use.

We have, however, always been averse to using any bedding but our own on such a journey, having been taught by experience that Arab bedding as a rule harbors all sorts of vermin. Therefore we left that undisturbed in the corners, and felt truly grateful when our host, seeing that we had our own bedding, had it removed for the use of his family in their temporary quarters.

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The Sheikh sent us milk, butter, cheese, eggs, several fowls, and six or eight water-melons; but where he got the fruit we were at a loss to guess, there being no sign of vegetation visible within ten miles around the village.

The day closed with one of those wonderful sunsets, such as are to be seen only in the desert. The majestic fiery orb of day threw a crimson lustre over the entire desert landscape, which was literally teeming with small camel caravans, wild horsemen, and cattle herds pouring in with hurrid step from all points of the compass, endeavoring to reach the village shelter before nightfall. We prepared our beds in the centre of the court-yard, which was splendidly illuminated by the starry firmament, where we lay down for the night, surrounded by our men and horses, expecting to enjoy a good sound sleep, if only for a few hours; but there's many a slip 'twixt cup and lip. Though quite prostrated from the excessive heat of the day, we could find no repose, the little tormentors called sand-flies, a tiny and scarcely visible yellowish fly, extremely troublesome in the sandy regions of Mesopotamia and Arabia, kept us busily rubbing and scratching ourselves all night. Towards midnight we were treated to a prolonged serenade of prowling jackals and musically disposed dogs. By two o'clock in the morning, the canine vocalists got tired of howling and relapsed into silence; but hardly had they withdrawn from the stage, when suddenly the shrill "loo loo loo loo loo loo loo loo" of apparently a hundred female voices, accompanied by the clapping of as many pair of hands, echoed dismally through the sultry night air.

It is customary with the Moslem women of the Orient, especially with those of Mesopotamia and Arabia, immediately after the birth of a child, to

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assemble in the house of its parents to congratulate the happy mother on the event; if, however, the new-born babe has the bad luck to be a girl, though it is not drowned or otherwise dispatched, there are no great demonstrations of joy made in her honor; should the child prove to be a boy, the joy of all interested in the event knows no bounds, and the whole house is turned topsy-turvey by the female friends of the unspeakably happy mother; loads of sweet-meats and other dainties are procured and consumed by the numerous congratulating female guests, who are loud in their praise of the favored mother, and finally they repair in a body to the court-yard, or on the flat roof of the house, squat down on the floor in a circle, and strike up the above-mentioned yell or song in chorus, repeating the same for hours, once in about every five minutes, and varying the entertainment with a loud clapping of the hands, without the vocal accompaniment, and with chatting or laughing.

What they mean to express by their monotonous and shrill chant, I am at a loss to say, unless it be to express their opinion that one more pearl has been ushered into the world, the Arabic word "Lulu" meaning a pearl. Yet it can hardly be thus explained, as they do not bestow this name on the "lords of creation," but, on the contrary, on the opposite sex, "Lulu" being a very common name for Arabian females. The concert of the women of Hamudieh lasted till nearly three o'clock in the morning, when it was succeeded by the braying of all the donkeys in the village, several hundred in number, assisted by the exultant cries of as many chanticleers, which creatures from time immemorial having been accustomed to herald the dawn insisted on their privilege of doing so that morning, and, together with the sand-flies, jackals, dogs, donkeys and

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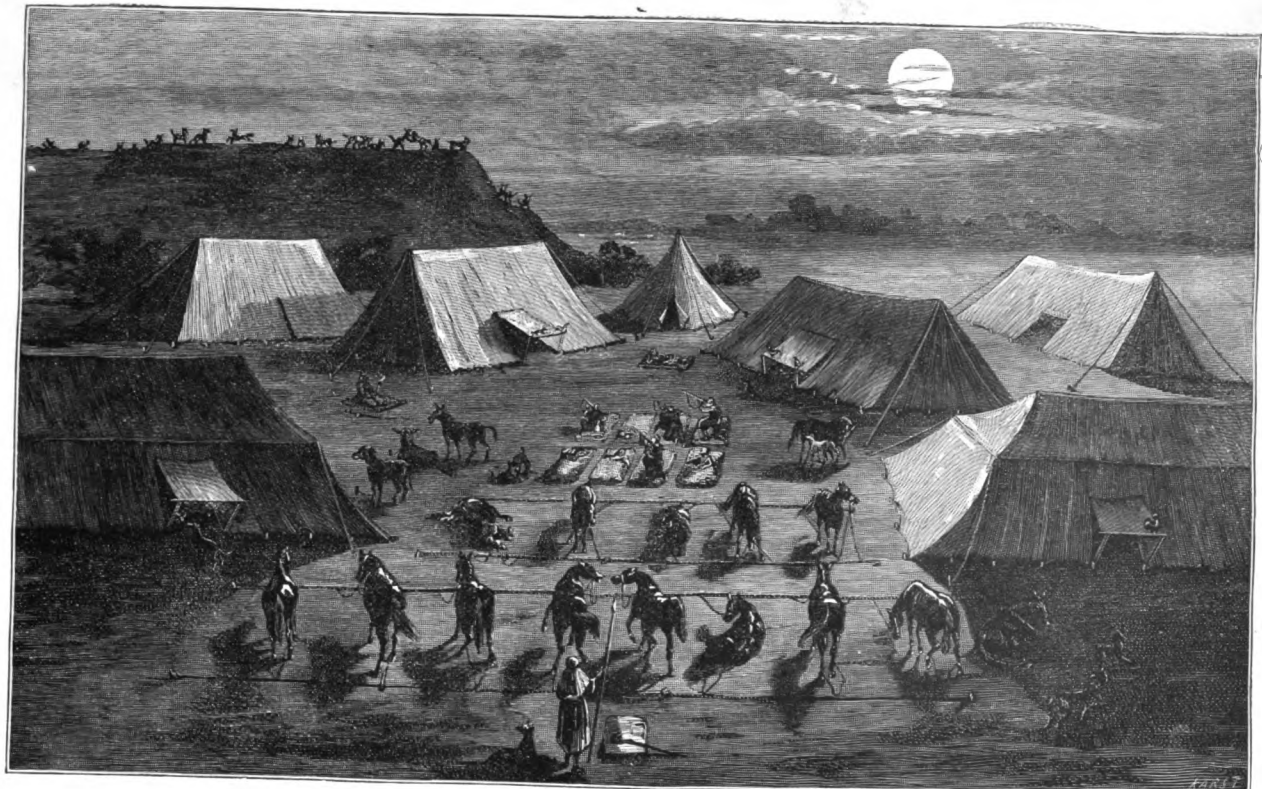

MIDNIGHT DISTURBANCE BY JACKALS.

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women, effectually managed to keep us awake all night.

Utterly disgusted with our night quarters at Hamudieh, we rose before daybreak and found the Sheikh already standing outside the court-yard, surrounded by ten horsemen armed with lances and daggers, whom he ordered to escort us to the foot of the mountain of Mardin, as the road was very unsafe.

Signor P. thanked him for his hospitality, and we marched out of Hamudieh in the best of spirits, notwithstanding our sleepless night, directing our course northwest across the barren plain towards a high rugged mountain chain called by the Arabs Jebl Mardin (Mardin mountain), some sixteen miles distant from Hamudieh.

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CHAPTER XXII.

OVER MOUNT MARDIN.

Lost Sheep—Mount Mardin at Last—View of El Jesireh Plains—Experience in Buying Provisions—Interview with the Kaimakan—The Citadel—Roasted Locusts—Armenian Distiller—Muezzins—Descent of the Mountain—A Shot in the Rear.

Before we had proceeded many miles we were joined by fourteen more horsemen, armed, like our escort, with long lances. At first we eyed them with suspicion, but one of the Sheik's horsemen, who was also his nephew, said that we need not doubt, as he knew them all. Our caravan now numbered over fifty men, and ran little risk of being attacked, yet our escort continually kept a good look-out on all sides.

The men who had joined us on the road belonged to a little village half way between Hamudreh and Mardin, and informed us that they were just returning from a search after a herd of sheep, which had been driven off by a band of marauding Bedouins a couple of days before; that they had discovered no traces of the two shepherds (men of their village), and had reason to believe that both had been murdered and buried. As to the sheep, they had traced them by a circuitous route to a small Bedouin camp close to the banks of the Jachjacha, and that they were now returning home to collect all the available men of their village, and with the assistance of some friends of Kotchhissar (a village at the foot of the south side of the Mardin Mountains), intended to make a raid on the robbers with the view of regaining their lost property, and at the same time get their revenge; in other words, to

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recover their own sheep and steal those of the thieves. About two hours afterwards these men left us abruptly, and rode slowly across the country towards their village, visible about three miles to the left of the road. I never heard the sequel of their expedition. We travelled until about half-past ten in the forenoon, when we found ourselves at the foot of the high and rugged Jebel Mardin, where our escort took leave of us. Here the road, which had been quite fair, became very steep and stony, and grew harder and harder to travel as we advanced into the huge, highly picturesque mountain gorge through which the road to Mardin leads. While we were still many miles away on the plain we could distinctly trace the outlines of this remarkable mountain fastness, dazzling in the rays of the early morning sun; but after entering the mountain gorge we were not a little astonished to see the snow-white minarets, mosques and other buildings clinging, as it were, like swallows' nests, to the bare, excessively high and almost inaccessible rocks, which form the southeastern slope of the Iebl Mardin. Indeed, a more thrillingly romantic situation for a town can scarcely be imagined. Towering as it does at the height of at least twenty-two hundred feet above the immense plains of El Jesireh, its buildings rather hanging to than standing upon the bleak mountain side. When viewed from below it appears downright impossible for man to climb up to it, not to speak of horses and camels and other beasts of burden. Nevertheless, numerous caravans are daily ascending and descending the mountain pass, with heavy loads, and strange as it may appear, an accident rarely happens to them.

After toiling painfully along over the outrageously uneven pavement of huge round boulders of extreme smoothness, with which the road at the entrance of the

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gorge is covered, we crossed the little brooklett hat runs through this awe-inspiring gorge, and ignorantly struck into the wrong path, by swerving to our right, instead of the left, and soon found ourselves on very difficult and dangerous ground. However, we had to push on to the spot where the two paths rejoined each other, as there was no room to turn our horses round on the excessively narrow mountain path (hardly three feet wide), with a yawning precipice on one side and a bare, perpendicular rock on the other. Not a zephyr stirred the air, and the sun shone with relentless power upon our backs, as we slowly and cautiously climbed from ledge to ledge, leading our animals by the bridle. Time wore on, and we began to think that we should never reach Mardin; for the more we advanced the more difficult became the ascent, and it took us fully three hours from the time we entered the gorge to reach our final halting place, a narrow space of nearly level ground, about four hundred yards to the left of the town, just where the mountain chain, overtowering the rear of the town, is intersected by a breach, or gap, so that from our position we could see not only the eastern, but also the northern slope of the mountain, with the Tigris valley in the distance (which we had not seen since we left Tesereh-ebn-Omar). I need hardly say that the panorama we viewed from this elevated point was intensely interesting. Looking towards the south, we saw extended at our feet the endless, barren plains of El Jesireh, the land of the nativity of Abram, the "Ur" of the Chaldees, very much resembling a huge, yellowish gray map, dotted here and there with a miserable village, a Bedouin camp, or a patch of low shrubs and bushes—not twenty trees being visible on the plains as far as the eye could reach, rendering this territory drearily monotonous and desolate in its aspect.

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Quite a different scene presented itself on the north side of the mountain chain—this side of the country presenting rather an irregular, mountainous character, looked fertile, well wooded and watered, and more thickly inhabited. It was studded with hills, mountains, and deep narrow valleys, some of which latter showed unmistakeable signs of cultivation. The suburbs of Mardin, too (though viewed from the foot of the mountain, quite barren-looking), presented a much less desolate aspect when seen from near by, for wherever there was the slightest deposit of soil on the granite rock it was overgrown with grass, bushes, vines, and even fruit and shade trees of considerable size, which gave the otherwise gloomy town an appearance of cheerfulness. Our horses were soon picketed, and our tent pitched in an equally short time, whereupon Signor P. despatched some of our men to the town to buy provisions, while two others were ordered to pilot Father M. to the monastery of the Jacobites, the prior thereof being an Italian, to whom Father M. was introduced by means of a letter from his clerical friend at Mossul. Our men soon returned with ample provisions and delicious fruit in the shape of figs and grapes. After breakfast I accompanied Signor P. to the town to see the Kaïmakam about a new escort. We found this worthy, an old, surly Turk, sitting cross-legged, surrounded by his clerks, and by his side another stern-looking personage in a white turban, who appeared to be the Cadi (judge), both sitting on a carpet in a corner of the apartment, settling disputes, and passing judgment right and left; tremblingly gaped at by a set of half-starved, dirty ragamuffins, who all had their complaints and defences to make. A gang of sorry-looking, drowsy Turkish soldiers, who had evidently been born and reared in a country destitute of soap and water,

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guarded the entrance to the apartment, and bullied the wretched natives who thronged in and out.

After waiting a long time in the sultry audience-room, without being invited by the Kaïmakam to sit down—as is the usual custom of these officials when visited by Europeans—we got tired of waiting, and intended to withdraw; but the soldiers at the door attempted to prevent us. We pushed them aside, however, and walked off; but we had not reached the street when one of the soldiers came running after us, and told us that the Kaïmakam was now at our service. We let him know, however, that that worthy's services were no longer required. This abrupt answer was evidently quite unexpected, and caused some uneasiness to the phlegmatic Turkish magistrate, who correctly believed us to be in the possession of a "Firman" or order from his imperial master, the Sultan, for our safe conduct, and to ignore such an order would have been fraught with dire consequences to the disobedient official. It was not, therefore, surprising that shortly after our return to camp the portly old Kaïmakam paid us a visit, accompanied by his suite of attendants, and being confronted with the hieroglyphics well known as the signature of the Sultan Abd-ul-Azis, and reverently kissing that talisman, he burst into a profusion of apologies for his seeming neglect of us, and pleaded hard to be permitted to serve us in any way, and insisted upon our accepting a huge tray of sweetmeats and a basket of delicious fruit, which he sent for, and of which, after keeping our visitor in terrible suspense for a long time, we accepted a portion in token of amity.

While still engaged with the Kaïmakam in talking, smoking and drinking coffee, we received another visit. The strangers were two young men in European

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costume, but wearing the inevitable "tarboosh," or fez, of the government official. On being introduced to us by the Kaïmakam, they proved to be telegraph operators stationed at Mardin, one of the stations of the telegraph line between Constantinople and Bassora. One of the young men was an Englishman, the other a Greek, and both wore the tarboosh only because it was compulsory for employees in the Ottoman service. As soon as the Kaïmakam had withdrawn, after humbly promising to have fifty zaptiehs ready to escort us to Diarbekir, if necessary, whenever we required them, the two young men became quite loquacious, the one in good, sound English, the other in fluent Italian. They admired our horses, complained of the dull life in this gloomy mountain fastness, and afterwards proposed a walk through the town, a proposal which we gladly accepted, as we had all sorts of purchases to make in the bazaar. Of course we found all the streets, or rather sinuous passages, in this crowded place very narrow and rugged; the principal streets boasted of a pavement composed of cobble-stones and huge boulders, most of them worn excessively smooth and slippery, and very dangerous to the legs and necks of man and beast All the buildings in the city are of the usual Oriental style, and though rather small are composed entirely of stone, and evidently well built, or they would long since have rolled into the yawning abyss beneath them.

Mardin contains a pretty, strong citadel located near the centre of the town, which is garrisoned by about one hundred and twenty soldiers (Turkish) very poorly clad, fed and armed. The entrance or gate of the citadel is magnificently ornamented with old arabesques, said to be the finest in the world, superior even to those of any of the Moorish masterpieces of archi-

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tecture in Spain, the famous Alhambra not excepted. Besides the citadel, there are many mosques with lofty minarets, several public baths, two small but well-stocked bazaars, a fine library and a Jacobite monastery (occupied by quite a number of French and Italian monks), and several other buildings. The inhabitants number about fifteen thousand, whereof one-half professed the Moslem faith, the other half the Christian creed; the latter community being composed of Chaldean, Maronite and Jacobite sects. The Arabic language is little spoken, and their manners, customs, dress and physiognomy are no longer Arabic, but unmistakably Turkish, or Kûrd, as in fact they are not Arabs, but Turcomans or Kûrds. These characteristics are more or less noticeable in the majority of the inhabitants of the cities and villages along our line of march from Kifri upwards; but in the population of Kifri, Karkuk, Erbil, Zachu, Jesîreh-ebn-Omar, Nisibin, etc., having a considerable mixture of Arab blood, betrays characteristics not purely Turcoman or Kûrd; speaks principally the Arabic language, and is not the true representative of the genuine native of that portion of the world.

While perambulating the streets, or rather lanes, of Mardin, we were struck by the remarkably healthy and vigorous appearance of its native inhabitants, both young and old, male and female. Their fair and rosy complexion, symmetric and athletic forms, clearly demonstrated the salubrity of the justly famed climate of this mountain fastness. Another pleasing characteristic of that place, evidently the result of the wholesome influence of a healthy and invigorating climate, is the industry of its population, especially of the Christian portion of it; numbers of whom are manufacturers of silk, woolen and cotton goods, leather ware,

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firearms, cutlery, jewelry, etc., etc., all of which find a ready sale in the bazaars of Mardin, as many of the Bedouin tribes on the plains of El Jesîreh pay periodical visits to Mardin for the double purpose of making their annual purchases and disposing of their own produce, such as sheep's wool, goat's hair, skins, butter, cheese, poultry, cattle, horses, camels, asses, etc.

In the course of our stroll through that part of the bazaar set apart for the sale of meat, fruit, grain, and other provisions, I noticed several baskets full of roasted locusts, a kind of fruit much in demand among the poorer classes of Mesopotamia, Arabia and Persia, especially by the inhabitants of Eastern Arabia and those of the coasts of the Persian Gulf, where they are exposed for sale in every bazaar, and, as may be presumed, disposed of at a very low price. They are roasted either on a thin stone slab or iron tray placed over a brisk fire until they are rendered quite brown and crisp, when they are considered fit for food. I have tasted them, and found them to be much like the tails or fins of fish when well fried. Though they are quite edible when fresh from the fire, they are not over good when eaten a few days after roasting, especially if not crisply done, as by that time they acquire a kind of stale shrimp odor. I never liked them much, probably owing to my prejudice against swallowing any kind of insects. I have, however, frequently seen Arabs and Afghans eat them by the pound apparently with great relish.

During our prolonged ramble through the bazaars of Mardin, our lucky star led us into the store of an old silver-bearded Armenian of gigantic stature, who did a thriving business in the distillery line; manufacturing a species of arak, of excellent flavor, which, when undiluted, had the peculiarity of being as pure

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and transparent as the clearest water, but as soon as it was brought in contact with that element it assumed a beautiful rose color.

Besides arak, he distilled spirits of wine or alcohol, rose water, ottar of roses, sherbet, etc. We bought a good supply of this arak (Mardin Arak having a considerable reputation in Mesopotamia). We were, however, particularly anxious to purchase wine, as it is not only more agreeable to drink in hot climates than spirituous liquor, but far more capable of quenching excruciating thirst than the latter.

Wine is generally preferred to water by the traveler in the East, not only because of its flavor, but in a sanitary point of view being more invigorating; and large quantities of water consumed in hot climates are liable to cause lassitude and fever. Our distiller did not, however, deal in wine, but referred us to his brother, who was immediately sent for. This individual piloted us through a labyrmth of narrow lanes and passages to a cave in the rocks behind his dwelling; the entrance to this cave was gained through a stout wooden door secured by a padlock of very primitive construction, which promptly yielded on application of an odd shaped key in the hand of our "Cicerone." The cave was low, about thirty feet square, inhabited by a family of bats which fluttered silently around us. On the ground, along the walls, stood a half a dozen earthen jars or urns capable of containing at least fifty gallons each. Some of them were empty, but the rest were full of excellent wine of a dark red color, the pure juice of grapes, which we were told were cultivated in large quantities on the northeastern slope of Jebl Madrin. The wine was icy cold, as was also the atmosphere of the cave, which really chilled us to the bone. We bought about six

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gallons for the very low price of twenty piasters (about one dollar), to be delivered, and paid for at our camp, at the other end of the town. Thereupon, we tramped back to the camp accompanied by our wine merchant, who, thanks to his wonderful sure-footedness, managed to carry the heavy earthen jug over the treacherous and slippery cobblestones of the outrageous pavement without "smashing" it. Arrived in camp, the wine was at once transferred to empty glass bottles, which had repeatedly been filled and emptied since our departure from Bagdad, and which we always kept carefully stowed away among our luggage in order to preserve them on our journey, as glass bottles were very scarce in that region, and cannot easily be bought throughout Mesopotamia; and even corks are held in high value in that country.

Shortly after our arrival in camp, the glorious sun began to descend behind the low, sandy undulating hills far away on the western horizon. What a magnificient sight was that sunset! The entire panorama was illuminated with a rosy, golden tint, which was conspicuous upon the snow white walls of the lofty mosques, with their glazed cupolas, the gilt crescents of the latter glittering like so many brilliant stars. By and by, however, the far thin clouds visible on the distant horizon, the mountain peaks, the minarets and mosques, a few moments before tinged with the richest hues, resumed their quiet color; the shadows grew longer and longer; the firmament assumed a dark blue hue; the echo of the plaintive and not unmelodious chorus of voices of the muëzzins, who, walking slowly and solemnly round the lofty balustrades of the different minarets, loudly summoned the "faithful" of the mountain city to prayer, gradually died away; a belated falcon or eagle soared overhead uttering one last, pierc-

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ing scream as he disappeared from our view. Here and there a bat flitting noiselessly, but in fantastic irregular lines through the cooling atmosphere, heralded the approach of night. The last ray of the sunlight faded from the horizon, and after a twilight of but a few moments one star after the other appeared, and the silvery moon rose gently from behind the dark outlines of the distant mountain chain, and spread soft light over the quiet landscape. The majestic sunset, the lovely starry moonlit night, and the wonderfully exhilarating night breeze blowing through the mountain gap, formed a delightful contrast to the suffocating, sultry nights and days, which we had hitherto experienced during our slow and toilsome march over the scorching and sandy plains of El Jesireh. We noticed this remarkable contrast the more, because of its being the first night which we passed in the invigorating atmosphere of the lofty mountain regions of Kûrdistan. An indescribable feeling swept over us at the thought that the most wearisome and monotonous part of our journey was over; and to accomplish the remainder of it seemed in comparison mere child's play; and although we had as yet scarcely achieved half our journey, we felt as if it were nearly at an end. Even Signor P., the head of our caravan, was rejoicing that he had brought his horses at least so far without accident. He knew how dangerous to the feet and legs of his extremely valuable drove of young and spirited Arabian horses were these rugged, mountainous passes, and he now felt that only by unceasing watchfulness and careful management would he succeed in delivering them to their imperial owner in Paris in proper condition. Our Arab grooms, too, few of whom had ever been so far north, or in a country so cool and mountainous, showed a marked change in their deport-

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ment for the quiet, grave mood so characteristic with the Arab gave way to a communicative, joyous disposition seldom seen among them. Every member of our caravan having experienced such a marked change for the better, it is not to be wondered at that our entrance into the territory of Kürdistan was duly celebrated that night by an improvised banquet, at which Signor P. and myself entertained, to the best of our ability, our newly made acquaintances, the two telegraph operators before mentioned.

A sumptuous dinner, to which we sat down in the open air under the starry firmament, was duly honored by a respectable number of bottles of the highly palatable Mardin wine. We had scarcely finished our meal, when our traveling companion, Father M., who had left us in the morning for the purpose of paying a visit to his clerical brethern at the Jacobite monastery, returned to camp, accompanied by three of the monks and a servant carrying a dozen bottles of wine in a basket as a present from the monastery.

Our visitors remained with us until near midnight seeming greatly to enjoy themselves. They took leave of us affectionately, and returned to the city together. Our Arab men had spent the evening in true Arab fashion; that is, they sat down on the ground in a circle, and sipped strong, scalding hot coffee, smoked mild tobacco, and listened to a story teller, laughing now and then, clapping with their hands occasionally to manifest their approbation, and shouting every little while, "Mashallah!" (glory be to God), meaning, when spoken in that manner, "very good," "excellent," "well done." A few minutes after our visitors had left our camp was plunged in silence; everybody, with the exception of the three watchmen stationed about the camp, being asleep; and had it not been for an

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occasional snort of a horse, or the stamp of a horse's foot, few passers-by would have been aware of the vicinity of a living being. Owing, undoubtedly, to the cool atmosphere, and to the entire absence of sand-flies, musquitoes, and other nocturnal tormentors, both man and beast enjoyed that night the soundest sleep that we had had while in Mesopotamia. So comfortably indeed did we rest, that none of the many sleepers stretched out on the ground was aware of the heavy dew which fell. The early morning sun already threw its dazzling rays upon the silent camp, when the increasing noise of approaching horses, saluted by a vigorous neighing from our own studs, roused us all from our slumbers, and warned us that it was high time to be stirring. The approaching troop of horsemen proved to be ten zaptïēhs (irregular cavalry used for escorting caravans) sent by the Kaïmakam of Mardin to escort us as far as Diarbekir, the capital of Kûrdistan, distant about sixty miles from the former in a northwesterly direction. All of these horsemen were Kûrds, or genuine natives of Kûrdistan, but not equipped with the customary long lances and curved dagger of the Arab, probably because the former must be rather an awkward weapon in a mountainous country. Each of these men was armed with a short, single barrelled matchlock musket, a pair of long, single barrelled flintlock pistols, and a large, strongly curved cavalry sword, the latter dangling from two leather straps attached to a broad leather belt, which served in the treble capacity of sword-belt, ammunition pouch and pistol holster. The saddles, also, of these ruffianly looking horsemen were no longer the small, narrow wooden framed, high pommelled, hard Arab saddles; but large, soft and roomy, composed of very smooth and pliable leather of a bright red, yellow or green color, amply stuffed with horse hair or sheep's wool.

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Unable to see the necessity of such a numerous escort, we retained but five of the best mounted zaptiēhs, and sent the others back to the Kaïmakam with our thanks. A frugal breakfast was then taken; our camp speedily broken up; all our luggage securely packed on our beasts of burden; our valuable horses well muffled in blankets, knee and fetlock caps, and by eight o'clock in the morning our whole caravan was slowly and cautiously descending the extremely steep and rocky northeastern slope of Jebl Mardin.

If the ascent of this mountain chain from the south side had been a very difficult task for us, the descent on the opposite side was still more so; for not only was the latter at least equally steep and dangerous, but the road, or rather footpath, was even narrower, in many places, indeed, so much so that not only our animals, but ourselves, who had of course to lead them by the bridle, had difficulty to find a spot whereon to place our feet. A slight idea of the nature of the locality is best given by telling my readers that in a good many places there were circular holes from one to three inches in depth, and from six to eight inches in diameter, deeply worn in the solid flinty rock, which, to judge from their respective positions and distance from each other, were evidently the footprints of every horse, camel, mule, and donkey ascending or descending the mountain for centuries—they being obliged, owing to the nature of the ground, and extreme narrowness of the path, to place their feet, each in the very same spots, in consequence of which practice the holes or imprints in the granite were gradually produced. The process of wearing these footmarks to such a depth in the hard rock must have been very slow; wherefore, I should not wonder if those very footmarks had been noticed by the wild horsemen of the terrible Timur or

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Tamerlane, the famous Mongol conqueror, who assailed, captured and devastated Mardin about the year 1392, and who, like the traveler of the present day, had no way to reach or leave Mardin except by the very road we traveled, there being no possibility of getting to or leaving this mountain fastness by any other route. The footmarks above mentioned were visible also on the track by which we had ascended to the city. Now and then, we reached a part of the mountain path which was not very steep, and allowed us to rest our horses a little.

During these short pauses, we enjoyed a most extensive view from our elevated position. On our right were the rugged mountain peaks and barren highlands of the territory of Tur Abdin extending north and eastward to the banks of the river Tigris, intersected here and there by deep, narrow ravines, the bottoms and both sides of which were lined with a dense growth of stunted trees and bushes covered with a dark green foliage, remarkably contrasting with the otherwise bleak and desolate looking rocky country around. On our left we noticed the less steep and more fertile hills and table lands which form the eastern end of a crescent shaped mountain chain, called Karadsha Dagh, and extending in a northwesterly direction from Jebl Mardin to the banks of the river Euphrates. Right before and deep below us extended a beautiful and fertile little valley, in some parts densely wooded, in others presenting excellent pasture ground, and exhibiting unmistakable proofs of cultivation in the shape of green corn-fields and vineyards, especially at the upper end of the valley at the base of the mountain on which we stood. A small, rapidly flowing river, the beautifully clear waters of which sparkled in the sunshine with intense brilliancy, and looked like liquid silver as it

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pursued its tortuous course towards the north, and was lost to view in the distance by a sudden bend of the valley. Far away on the hazy horizon, we espied the silvery, winding sheet of water well known to us as the river Tigris, an old acquaintance to which the rivulet of the little valley served as a tributary; but what attracted our attention much more than the scenery about us was the appearance of large numbers of horses and cattle scattered along the banks of the little stream; and the presence of numerous strangely clad human beings among them; although—with the exception of a single mosque, dilapidated, and situated some distance from the right bank of the river—we could not discover tents, huts, or any other habitation of human construction, as far as we could gaze along the valley. Yet numerous columns of smoke slowly curling up from the densest clusters of trees and bushes seemed to indicate that we were approaching a large camp. The result of our discovery will hereafter be told.

Our descent into the valley below was naturally very slow and tiresome. Owing to the dangerous condition of the mountain path, everybody was compelled to travel on foot, carefully leading his horse by the bridle, almost the entire distance between Mardin and the foot of the mountain. Even Bahri, the negro girl, had to do the same with her snow-white donkey, an animal of truly wonderful power of endurance. By eleven o'clock in the forenoon, we had nearly reached the foot of the mountain, and the road had by that time assumed a more practicable character, so that we could resume our position in the saddle. Our track led now for a considerable distance right through the middle of an extensive area of vineyards; every vine in which was literally borne to the ground by the weight

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of the grapes growing upon it; and what grapes! averaging a pound each bunch, with the fruit of the size of walnuts, having a skin of almost transparent thinness, and full of a delicious juice; sweet as honey, and when rubbed between the fingers, quite adhesive, like mucilage. Never before or since did I see in any vineyard such a profuse crop of grapes, and of so matchless a quality. All the vineyards appeared as if they were carefully watched, for we noticed numerous individuals on the lookout, some of whom, attracted by the tramp of the caravan, came down to the road, offering large quantities of grapes for sale, for a mere trifle. Others we saw sitting on a sort of narrow wooden platform, erected on an elevated spot, and roofed over with brushwood or grass as a protection against the rays of the scorching sun. These lookouts presented very much the appearance of huge bee-hives perched on four long poles or stakes, driven into the ground, similar to the huts of some of the savage tribes of Africa and Asia, who thus protect themselves against the moisture of the ground, as well as against the attacks of wild animals and dangerous reptiles. The grapes being obtainable at so small a price, Signor P. ordered a short halt, bought a large quanity of them, and distributed them liberally among the men, but strictly forbid them to steal a single grape, however closely the vines might grow by the road-side. This order was for a time faithfully obeyed; but we had scarcely gone a mile further, when we were startled by the loud report of a musket in our rear. At a loss what to think of this, we looked back, almost suspecting that we had been way-laid, and were about preparing to defend ourselves, when we saw one of our men about a hundred yards behind us, clear the low wall which separated the vineyards from the road, alight in the middle of the narrow road-way,

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and run as fast as his legs could carry him toward our caravan. The cause of the shot was now evident; the fellow, knowing that Signor P. would not permit him to take grapes, managed to lag behind the caravan unsuspected by anybody, and, stealing into a vineyard, helped himself to the tempting fruit. His suspicious movements, however, must have been noticed by some watchman concealed about the vineyards; suffice it to say that the grape thief got shot at; and hearing a bullet whistle by his ears, and strike the wall behind him, he could not appreciate the joke, but bolted back to the caravan for protection. Signor P. gave the fellow, who happened to be one of the Mukaries, a severe rebuke; but it was hardly necessary, for he was frightened almost out of his wits by his narrow escape.

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XXIII.

VALLEY OF EL JESEIREH.

Through the Valley—Meeting a Circassian Caravan—Meshed Village Peculiarities—Stampede of the Horses—Turkish Soldiers Guard our Camp—Uses of a Circassian Cart—Female Costumes—Domestic Life—Onward Again—The Ancient Fortress—An Ostrich Race—Shooting an Elephant by Mistake.

Slowly passing on through the narrow valley, an abrupt curve brought us suddenly face to face with five warlike, strangely equipped and still more strangely costumed horsemen evidently bound for Mardin. The Arabs and Koords of our caravan gaped with unfeigned wonder at the to them mysterious strangers with their outlandish garb and equipments, and, mounted on foreign-bred horses, presenting an altogether different aspect to either "Feringhies" (Europeans), Turks, Persians, Arabs, or any other nation our men had as yet seen. We, however, the European members of our caravan, were not long in defining the nationality of our unexpected friends. The very first glance at them, in fact, was sufficient for us to unanimously pronounce them to be Circassians; and we almost immediately remembered that just before our departure for Bagdad we had read in the *Journal de Constantinople*—a paper which finds its way through Turkish couriers to the "City of the Caliphs"—that in consequence of a mutual agreement between the courts of St. Petersburg and Constantinople, his Majesty the Emperor of Russia would exchange an equal number of subjects with his Majesty the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire, several hundred native Christians (Greek Catholics) of Turkey in Asia having petitioned the

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Sultan for permission to emigrate, giving as their reason their inability any longer to endure the persecutions of the Moslems among whom they were living. The Czar of Russia, hearing of this petition, and being aware that a portion of his own subjects in Circassia were very fanatical and unruly Moslems, proposed the above mentioned exchange to the Sultan. The offer was promptly accepted; and shortly after, about ten thousand Greek Catholics of the Ottoman Empire emigrated and settled on the Russian shores of the Black Sea; while an equal number of Moslems packed up their goods and chattels, left Circassia, the land of their birth, entered the Turkish dominions in Asia, and, after wandering about for some time in the Ottoman Empire in quest of a suitable place of settlement, finally brought up in mountainous Kürdistan, and selected the wild and almost uninhabited valleys of the district of Tur Abdin for their future home, as the country nearest resembling the one they had abandoned forever. The five Circassian horsemen, who had met us so unexpectedly, were evidently despatched to Mardin by their chief, either to confer with the Turkish authorities there, or for some other important purpose; for they passed us at a sharp trot, their small, rough-haired, strong-jointed, vicious-looking horses fairly steaming with perspiration. They passed us in sullen silence, eyeing us closely as they brushed by us; and what struck us forcibly was, that they scarcely looked at our magnificent drove of horses, which compared with their own rough Cossack ponies as the graceful gazelle compares with an old he-goat. However, as they so haughtily ignored us, I will be even with them and pass them without further notice in my narrative, until I give an accurate description of the whole tribe, whereof these five worthies were, I presume, but insig-

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nificant members. For more than an hour after meeting these strangers, we travelled a solitary road, seeing no signs of human life, until we reached an elevation, from which we could again survey the valley into which we descended, and at the bottom thereof the small mosque we had before seen, lying at the edge of a fine green lawn bordered by dense foliage trees, and a couple of low, wretched, flat-roofed dwellings, built of rough, unhewn stone and sun-dried brick. The whole place and surroundings teemed with human beings, carts, horses, cattle, etc., etc.; and innumerable camp-fires could be seen smouldering and smoking all around. A short march brought us to the village, or rather hamlet, called by some Scheichân, by others Meshed Hussein (*Anglice*, Mosque of Hussein or Hassan), and at the same time we found ourselves at the head-quarters of a vast Circassian camp. At first we felt rather uncomfortable in the midst of so many athletic, desperately warlike looking individuals, who by their numerical strength alone might have "eaten us up, without salt or pepper," had they been so disposed. It was, therefore, but natural that we selected a quiet spot, some five hundred yards distant from the village, for our halt. A narrow, but very rapid mountain stream of crystal pure water divided our camping ground from the village and from the Circassians, which fact led us to hope that it would serve as a sort of barrier against inquisitive spectators and other unwelcome intruders from the opposite side of the river. This expectation was, however, doomed to be disappointed; for, we had no sooner forded the stream, than we were followed by crowds of Circassians, some on horseback and some on foot, all of them fording the river to satisfy their curiosity and get a good look at the "Giaours" (infidels, Non-Moslems). Indeed, before

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we had picketed our horses, we were fairly surrounded by a perfect living wall of these painfully inquisitive semi-savages, who in their eagerness to witness everything that we were doing, drew the circle gradually closer and closer around us, so that they at last interfered with our movements. Signor P., annoyed with their obtrusiveness, remounted his horse, and addressed them in Arabic, French, and Italian; but they understood neither language, though they did the Circassian, Russian, Persian, or Turkish. In this emergency, Mohammed, the Turkish soldier, cavass, and veteran of the Crimean war, whom, as previously mentioned, we had picked up on the road between Jesireh-eben-Omar and Ernooz, jumped into his saddle for the purpose of requesting the inquisitive crowd in polite Turkish to stand back; but he had scarcely begun to speak, when a number of the horses became restive, as the Circassians came too near them, and were for a time ungovernable, causing a stampede in which several of the unwelcome visitors were injured. The equine riot had the effect of causing the inquisitive crowd to keep at a more respectful distance; moreover, the sudden stampede from our camp had been witnessed by the officers of a detachment of Turkish soldiers stationed near the village for the purpose of preserving order among the Circassian immigrants, and suspecting that the latter had made an attack upon the camp of the Feringhies, the officer in command crossed the river with a strong guard of men to give us assistance and protection. Upon learning the true state of things he smiled; but being soon after confronted with the execrable hieroglyph, at the foot of our letter of safe conduct, so well known among Turkish officials, he recognized the "handwriting" as the autograph signature of Sultan Abdul Azzis, and

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kissed that charming scrawl most reverently, declaring himself anxious to serve us in every possible way, and insisted upon stationing a strong guard of soldiers round our camp, to which Signor P., our chief, did not object, less from necessity, than to oblige our military visitor, who proved to be a prominent general of the Turkish army, and wore on his breast various high military badges and medals. He stayed in our camp nearly all day, enjoying our hospitality, admiring our horses, and keeping up a lively conversation through Mohāmmed, our interpreter. He told us that the Circassians had only arrived in that valley a few days previous to our visit; that all of them intended to settle permanently in that district, and were only awaiting the arrival of the commissioners of the Turkish government, who were hourly expected from Mardin with a large caravan of camels loaded with cereals, salt and other necessaries of life, to be distributed among the immigrants; while he had been commissioned by the government with their protection and the preservation of order among them. Although himself not long acquainted with these immigrants, he considered them a bold and energetic class of people, but at the same time very proud and insolent; and though apparently quite honest and peaceable among themselves, were in reality of a rather warlike and turbulent disposition, possessed of proclivities for pilfering and vagrancy, and that he had already been compelled to shoot two of them, convicted of highway robbery and murder. He was strongly inclined to believe that the Muscovite government had profited by the exchange and was undoubtedly glad to be rid of this unruly element. "However," he added, with true Moslem submission and devotion, "the judgment of the Ruler of the faithful"—meaning, of course, the

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Sultan—"cannot but be wise and right, and there must, therefore, be good reason for it."

Our camp, guarded as it was by twenty Turkish sentinels, with loaded muskets, placed there by an officer of high rank in the Turkish army, who was invested with full authority to shoot any of the soldiers or Circassians disobeying his orders, could well dispense with our presence for a few hours. We three Europeans, therefore, gladly accepted the invitation of our military protector to join him in holding a review of the foreigners under his charge, which review he held daily for the purpose, as he said, of learning the condition of these people, hearing their complaints, ascertaining their wishes, and distributing rations, medicines, etc., etc. Considering this an excellent opportunity of observing the characteristics of a nation hitherto too romantically described, we eagerly mounted our horses, and with the officer and an escort of soldiers started towards the Circassian camp. We moved straight toward a large crowd of men assembled on a level piece of ground in the vicinity of the mosque. On our arrival among them, it was evident that they were holding a sort of public meeting; for, in the centre of the crowd, which was drawn up in a large circle, we noticed several old men sitting *à la Turc* on a large felt carpet; and, in the middle of this carpet, standing erect on an improvised platform, a large, broad-shouldered man with a deeply furrowed and weather-beaten countenance, was haranguing the crowd. His shaggy eyebrows, and long hair and beard nearly as white as snow, contrasted strangely with his dark-brown complexion and his intelligent, though wrinkled features, animated by the fire of his unusually large, bluish gray eyes. Unfortunately for us, he spoke in a strange, guttural tongue, utterly unintelligible to all of us, the Turkish General

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not excepted. A dead silence reigned throughout the circle as long as the venerable orator—who proved to be the chief of the Circassian colony—was speaking, and when he concluded, the crowd slowly and quietly dispersed, the majority proceeding to their quarters; but many remained on the ground eagerly scanning the movements of the Turkish officer and his European companions, and commenting upon us in their peculiar, but not wholly unmelodious language. Among those who remained were the Circassian chief, and his attendants. We rode up to him, and after the customary salāam, were, through an interpreter, formally introduced by the Turkish officer. On learning our desire to inspect the Circassian camp the chief volunteered to guide us through it, and ordered his horse and those of his attendants to be brought. The majority of the Circassians were encamped among the trees that line the river bank, and thither we rode. We found a prodigious number of small gipsy tents pitched under the trees, and awnings suspended between two or more trees or low hanging branches. The material used for most of these tents was a kind of coarse cloth, manufactured of sheep's wool, goat or horse hair; others were made of a sort of coarse dirty white felt; others, again, were composed of thin pliant leather or untanned skins, with the hair still upon them. I noticed but very few canvass tents, and the few I saw had undoubtedly been originally used by Russian soldiers, as Russian letters and the Russian eagle could be plainly discerned upon them. To judge from their contents, the greater part of these tents were only occupied during the day, or were more used for storage than for the purpose of living therein, for all the bedding, utensils etc., were stowed away in large old-fashioned roughly-constructed, two wheeled carts, with stout wooden axletrees, and

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huge, cumbrous, wooden wheels. Each wheel was composed of one solid piece of wood, at least six inches thick, cut from the trunk of a tree, three to five feet in diameter, with a round hole cut in the centre to admit the axletree; and through the ends of the latter, large wooden spikes were driven to prevent the wheel from going off. There were no iron hoops about the wheels; indeed the entire vehicle was guiltless of iron or other metal fastenings of any description.

I am convinced that any backwoodsman, with nothing but an axe and a saw at his command, could construct a much more respectable and easy going vehicle. I was told that every one of these antediluvian carts was dragged all the way from the Caucasus by oxen, which I readily believe, for surely any horse would have died of shame fastened to one of those uncouth machines. Nevertheless, these carts must have proved very useful to the emigrants in their wearisome journey over mountains and through valleys; through chasms and rivers, over a thousand miles of rough uneven country, utterly destitute of roads and bridges. In these clumsy affairs they transported their goods and chattels, and also such members of the tribe as were unable to travel on horseback, either from being too young, too old, or too feeble; and now that they were encamped, they used these sadly worn, yet still strong vehicles, for temporary habitations for both sexes, young and old. They were all drawn up in a row beneath the trees, just opposite the tents, a large, coarse felt blanket or woolen or canvass cover being suspended horizontally over each cart, and another in front. The unexpected appearance of their venerable commander, the Turkish "General," the few European strangers and the numerous escort on horseback caused considerable commotion among the occupants of

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the tents and wagons, wherever we passed; our advent being loudly announced by a multitude of savage curs, as well as by the numerous children playing about. Some of these dogs were really quite dangerous brutes, and made me feel right glad that I was on horseback. Many of the children were entirely destitute of clothing, and most of them were clad only in tattered garments; their dirty faces and dishevelled hair indicating utter neglect and want of cleanliness; but the elasticity of their step, their agility, and their cheerful faces denoted vigorous health. In various places we saw infants, hardly able to walk or creep, left to shift for themselves, but fastened to a tent peg, cart or tree by one end of a rope or leather thong, the other end being bound about their waists. Boys over twelve years of age were dressed like full-grown men, and girls over eight years old wore the regular costume o the Circassian woman. As to the men and youths, they were clad much alike, in a sort of military garb, a loose tunic reaching to the knees, made of a coarse strong woolen fabric, usually of dark gray, dark green, or dark brown hue. This tunic was entirely destitute of buttons, and was closed so that it had to be slipped over the head of the wearer, and had small pockets, from eight to twelve in number, on each side. Each of these was about one inch wide and between three and four inches deep, just large enough to hold a copper or brass tube about the size of a man's finger. These tubes contain the powder, wadding and balls of the wearer, and each one is furnished with a movable bottom and a cover, which is supposed to close the tube, so that it is air and water tight, keeping the powder dry. Thus the Circassian not only carries his ammunition constantly about him, but this hidden row of closely arranged copper or brass tubes may also prove useful as a

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sort of armor, or coat of mail, partially protecting him from the dagger thrusts, sabre cuts, bullets, lances or arrows of the enemy.

The lower part of the body was encased in a pair of pantaloons of the same material as the tunic, tight-fitting and reaching from the waist to the ankle. Those which I saw were lined with soft leather around the ankle, and on the inner side from the knee downward. The shoes worn by these Circassians were made of one single piece of soft light-gray felt or leather, and reached to just above the ankle. The sole was a piece of stout, tough leather sewed on the shoe, and destitute of a heel. They wore a high conical fur hat or cap made of sheepskin with the wool on. The inside of these caps, which measured at least twelve inches in height, was lined with thin cloth and the top of the cap was made of bright scarlet cloth, or in some cases brown, green or black. The color of the cap was usually gray mingled with white, but sometimes it was black or brown. This head piece was without exception worn considerably backwards over the neck. During inclement weather, a kind of fur mantle of the same material, color and workmanship as the cap, and reaching from the shoulder nearly to the knee is also worn. Almost every youth and man in this Circassian camp wore, dangling from a narrow leather girdle, the short sword with the short handle of horn, ivory or silver-wire, used by the Circassians, Afghans and Persians, and already fully described in another part of of this book. In addition of the sword just spoken of, these Circassians carry, when fully armed, a pair of long, single barrelled, cavalry pistols in leather or felt holsters hanging under the left arm, and a long single barrelled musket provided with either flintlock or matchlock. Although furnished with locks of a rather

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antique pattern, the firearms themselves are of very good workmanship, and hit at short distances with considerable accuracy. As to the Circassian women, they wore a costume similar to that which during my travels I had observed that the Persian women adopted: that is a kind of long gown of colored merino or muslin, fitting closely about the upper part of the body, with a very short waist, and tight sleeves from shoulder to elbow, gradually increasing in width to the wrist, where they were very wide.

The bodice opens over an under-dress of thin white muslin-gauze, embroidered with silk or gold thread, the same as worn by the Persian and Christian women of Bagdad. All these Circassian girls and women wore the "pajāmas," characteristic of the Moslems of both sexes throughout the Orient, a sort of wide trousers of striped muslin or silk gathered round the waist and ankles. There feet were encased in slippers of embroidered cloth, felt, or leather. The only point noticeable to me in which the costume differed materially from that of the ordinary female Oriental dress, lay in the fact that although Moslems, none of the Circassians whom I saw wore veils. Another difference was in the peculiar head dress, which seemed to be a very small round hat, or skull-cap, resting jauntily on the side of the head, apparently composed of fine straw or wicker-work and about the shape, size, and color of the crown of a baby's white straw hat. I should be under any circumstances very inexpert in describing any kind of female dress or fashion, but in this instance I trust that I may be excused, because of the difficulties I met with in obtaining information. The female population of the Circassian camp, although intensely curious and anxious to get a good peep at the Europeans, were, with the true Moslem character,

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unwilling to expose themselves to strangers; and hurriedly took refuge behind carts, tents, trees, bushes, or cattle, on our passing them; so that had I not been very quick and keen-sighted I would have seen but little of the vaunted Circassian female beauty. The Circassians, so far as I can judge by those I saw, are rather a fine looking race; for they were tall, robust and healthy, and remarkable well-developed physically. The expression of their faces was pleasing and indicative of considerable intelligence. Their symmetrical features and large blue, gray, or light brown eyes, give to their countenances a look of frankness, honesty and innocence, which I fancy is deceptive, if the stories of the atrocities committed by them on the Russian soldiers and travelers be true. Their most noticeable bodily characteristics were a fine erect carriage, even when old and gray headed; small hands and feet, oval face, expansive chest, well shaped chin and mouth, small white teeth, Greek nose, and eyes as described above. They have boldly arched brows, finely shaped foreheads and luxuriant hair, blonde, light brown, auburn, or even red; black being very rare among them. Indeed, but for their outlandish costume, large numbers of them might have been taken for natives of northern Europe; for instance, of Denmark or Sweden. Their complexion, too, especially that of the younger women, is very fair, and has that peculiar rosy, velvety texture so frequent among the inhabitants of Northern Europe and America, and usually regarded by us as an indication of health. In this they contrasted favorably with the sallow, or parchment-skinned denizens of Western Asia previously described.

Although they are unquestionably a fine looking people, I did not see any of these world renowned beauties, the heroines of so many tales, romances, and

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poems, immortalized by both Christian and Moslem writers of poetry and fiction, and so eagerly sought and purchased at enormous prices, by wealthy Moslems when they were taken to the slave market. Although a large number of the younger women in the Circassian camp were decidedly good looking, it is certain that very few, if any of them, were gifted with rare beauty. The clan or tribe to which they belonged were a hardy, war-like tribe of mountaineers of Circassia proper, dwelling on the eastern shores of the Black Sea, while the people so famous for their beauty, and who stock the slave markets and harems of the Orient with the fairy like beauties of romance are Georgians, natives of the country of Georgia, situated southeast of Circassia, and northeast of Persia, having the Caucasian mountain chain for its northern boundary, wherefore it is also called Trans-Caucasia. The Georgians are also subjects of the Czar of Russia and are mostly Greek Catholics, consequently monogamists, while the Circassians are, as Moslems, polygamists. The former speak a language differing from that of the Circassian and are much less warlike. In their general appearance, these two nations present great similarity, especially as regards the fair sex, and the difference between them might be described by comparing them to two bank notes, a genuine and a counterfeit one, at first sight seeming alike; but on closer examination a very plain difference exists so that one cannot be mistaken for the other. Many a Circassian beauty is sold and paid for as a Georgian, but never a Georgian for a Circassian. As with all nations, so it is with these two, although each counts among its members some very good looking people; there is a majority of plain ones among them, a considerable number of the Circassians and Georgians owing their inferior personal

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appearance to the dreadful ravages of the small-pox. The Circassian and Georgian women sold in the markets are mostly captives taken in war, or they have been kidnapped in one way or another; though some are actually sold by their parents, who are well aware that if their daughters are of attractive appearance, their lot will be that of any handsome woman in the Orient, namely, that of luxurious ease and pleasant captivity; and if they be not gifted with personal charms, the parents consider that they will be no worse off if sold to the highest bidder, than if they were taken to wife by any of the poorer classes of the men of their own country; because in either case, they will have to do the work of their master's or their husband's household, luxury, idleness, and the other privileges of the zenāna (harem) being in prospect for those only who belong to wealthy Moslems, as they alone can afford to pay high prices and keep in idleness, handsome but useless women. Of course both the fair and plain looking girls are in reality slaves, unless given to their husbands directly by their parents. If sold to a stranger, they are nothing but slaves until they are raised to the position of wives by their "lords and masters," but as I have previously stated, the lot of a Moslem female slave is far from being a hard one, and slavery for them is only a temporary deprivation of liberty, as all are sooner or later granted their freedom. Female slaves are raised occasionally to the dignity of wives by their masters, or given in marriage to members of the master's own family, and sometimes to "outsiders." Male slaves are after a while permitted to marry female slaves and sometimes even the daughters or other relatives of their masters, after receiving their freedom. On their marriage with slaves, which must be authorized by their masters, both male and female

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slaves receive their liberty. Most people unacquainted with the true state of affairs will naturally condemn the apparently outrageous conduct of Circassians and Georgian parents in selling their daughters as soon as they have attained womanhood, *i. e.*, their 10th, 11th, or 12th year. But these censors should consider that these people, hardly half civilized, are utterly destitute of education; that, like other Orientals, they have peculiar notions of morality; that they still adhere to their old, traditional custom of disposing of their daughters to the best advantage.

Much pleased with our inspection of the Circassion's camp, we were compelled by the approaching night to take leave of our two guides, much to the regret of both, but especially of the old Circassian chief who had offered us the hospitality of his tent; and to insure our acceptance the old fox had told us that there would be a performance of beautful "*Almas*" (female dancers) in the evening. The bait, though well thrown, did not take; for although we were sorry to disappoint the old man (who was a relative of the famous "Schamyl, the Circassian Abd-el-Kader, so long the terror of the Russian soldiery), we could not help it; for it was near sunset, and we had been absent from our camp already too long; we were also familiar with the Kûrdish and Arabian "Almas," whose exhibition is nothing but a series of slow dances executed to wretchedly monotonous music by one or more fantastically dressed girls, who, while dancing, seem to vie with each other in the execution of the most voluptuous gestures and postures, an exhibition essentially demoralizing; and presuming that Circassian dance would be of the same character, we respectfully declined, recrossed the river and reached our camp just before sunset, pretty well tired, hungry and thirsty, which troubles we soon remedied at

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our camp-table, which was literally groaning under the weight of inviting dishes. Soon after nightfall our camp was plunged into deep silence, broken only now and then by the challenge of the Turkish sentinels who had received orders from their superior officer to stay with us all night. On the other side of the river, however, there seemed more life; for until midnight the distant sound of rude and monotonous Oriental music echoed from different quarters, lights and torches could be seen moving weirdly about the Circassian camp and numerous camp-fires blazed in all directions. The night air was humid and quite chilly, necessitating the use of woolen blankets, and the skies were overcast with a dense haze, so that neither moon nor stars were visible. Toward daybreak the haze dispersed, and the dark blue tint of the sky indicated a very hot day. An hour before sunrise we were once more on the road, winding our way down the deep narrow valley, along the outskirts of the camp of the Circassians, which was still plunged in peaceful quietude, but carefully watched by the shaggy and savage shepherd dogs. Scattered in groups all along the valley we noticed numbers of horses, or rather ponies (for they were much smaller than our own horses), oxen, cows, sheep and goats, all of them rough-haired, emaciated and miserable looking, evidently in consequence of their recent change of climate and pasture ground, as well as their long marches. It was painful to see their dejected gaze at us as we passed by.

After following the course of the little river for about two hours, it suddenly swerved off towards the northeast, while our route lay in a northwesterly direction, up and down hill, across a very uneven, barren and stony country, apparently uninhabited, except by immense numbers of the sand-grouse so often mentioned.

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Signor P. and I (riding, as I usually did, in advance of our caravan) shot freely at them, and they were quickly picked up by our followers on foot. The loud echo of the report of our guns startled a flock of large vultures which had evidently been hovering round some dead animal, as yet invisible, lying in or near the road some distance ahead of us. Rising in wide spiral circles from the ground, they gyrated higher and higher above our heads, the rustling noise created by the slow, phlegmatic flapping of their powerful wings being distinctly audible to us before we saw them. Slowly we moved on, but the nearer we drew to the spot whence they had risen, the more the sickening odor which permeated the air increased, its unpleasant effect being evidenced by the snorting and sneezing of our horses. A further progress of a hundred yards brought us to the source of the pestilential odor. There, right alongside the road, in a little dried-up gully or ravine, lay the putrid carcases of at least forty oxen, cows, horses and sheep, unmistakeably of Circassian breed, which, unable from exhaustion to proceed any further, or dying from thirst or disease, were led, or more probably thrown into the ravine to die. On every rock and stunted tree in the ravine were perched hundreds of ghastly vultures, so completely gorged with carrion as to be utterly unable to take wing, and so helpless that two of our men bowled over several of them with sticks and stones. Disgusted with the offensive picture we hurried on, but during the next two hours' march we repeatedly passed similar scenes, and in one instance actually saw two hyenas and a gang of jackals feast on the carrion in plain daylight, scarcely noticing us until a shot was fired at them, when they took to their heels in good earnest and rapidly disappeared over the hills. About eleven o'clock in the forenoon we sighted a

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fortified village situated on the top of a steep conical hill entirely destitue of vegetation. Although apparently not far off, it took us nearly two hours to reach it. When we finally got to the foot of the hill we judged it advisable to give our horses and men a few hours' rest, because both appeared to be suffering from the intense heat of the day. Upon close examination the sides of the hill upon which the village stood proved to be so excessively steep, that we thought it almost impossible for our heavily laden beasts of burden, exhausted as they were by the scorching heat of the sun, to climb up to the village; moreover, there was such a fine shady grove, on the banks of a rivulet which irrigated the gardens at the base of the hill, that we preferred to stay at the foot. We were not long in discovering that we acted wisely in the matter, for shortly after our arrival we noticed a long file of women of all ages, issuing from one of the gloomy gates of the lofty ancient fortress (for such, indeed, this dismal looking nest proved to be), and slowly descending the steep and narrow footpath to the river to fill their earthen jugs; and we learned from them that every drop of water consumed in the village, which they called Khanich, had to be carried up there from the river, owing to the exhaustion of rain water in the dilapidated old cisterns of the fortress, caused by leakage and long drought. A very pleasant place to live in, that old Kûrdian mountain-nest must be, without a drop of water within its tottering brick walls, which look as if they were only awaiting a good excuse to tumble down into the valley beneath, and crush the miserable little hamlet of sun-dried mud houses in the vicinity of which we were encamped. During the course of the afternoon I strolled over to the hamlet with Signor P. to purchase, if possible, some fruit for our table. We succeeded in

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procuring some delicious musk- and water-melons. The individual who sold us the fruit offered for sale a number of wild asses and ostriches, which he kept in a spacious yard enclosed by a low wall of sun-dried brick. He informed us that they belonged to his brother, a trader, then absent on a trading tour among the Anezzi Bedouins, on the borders of the river Euphrates, who had bought them from the Bedouins and sent them home by caravan, bound for Diarbekir. The asses as well as the ostriches were all young, but nearly grown, and remarkably fine specimens. As it is not every one's good fortune to fall in with the "wild ass of the desert," I deem it appropriate to describe those which I saw. The asses were of a light fawn color, almost white on the legs and under-part of the body. They had short woolly manes of jet black, and a line of bushy hair along the whole length of the spine from head to tail, a streak of black hair in the shape of a crescent over the withers. In form, they resembled the domestic ass, except that their proportions were much more symmetrical. Their legs were considerably longer; their bodies, heads, necks, and especially their ears, were less fleshy and ponderous than those of the domestic specimen; presenting altogether a better appearance; their infinitely greater activity and vivacity, and nobler carriage, causing the difference between the two specimens to be as striking as that between a spirited racer and a common dray horse.

The wild ass is a native of the vast and arid plains, and mountainous regions of Asia, especially of Tartary, Persia and Mesopotamia, where he roams in droves of from ten to one hundred in number, the strongest and most active of them leading the others. It is a very fleet and wary animal, of great endurance, and consequently very difficult to catch, or hunt down, even by

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the best mounted hunters. Its flesh is considered a delicacy by the natives of the countries where it abounds, and they delight in the hunt for it. Xenophon, the famous Greek general and historian, described it about the year 400 B. C., in his "Anabasis," as fleeter than the horse, and its flesh resembling that of the red deer, but more tender. The few that were offered to us in that village had been caught when very young, for they were apparently quite tame and domesticated. Upon our trying to touch them, however, they began to kick and snap at us so furiously that we had to beat a hasty retreat. The wild ass, owing to its vicious temper, is considered to be utterly unfit for domestication, at least for any length of time; besides, it either cannot, or will not live long in captivity, however great the care taken of it; therefore, it is rarely if ever seen alive in Europe or America. As to the ostriches exhibited to us, they also were evidently caught when quite young, for they were remarkably tame, and fed out of our hands, and even allowed us to touch them for the purpose of examining their plumage.

Although they all stood nearly six feet in height from the ground to the top of the head, they were considerably inferior in height to those I had seen and killed while traveling through the interior of South Africa in 1863–1865 (where, by the way, I once narrowly escaped trouble in attempting to shoot one which I happened to espy in a desolate and apparently uninhabited country beyond the Gariep, or Orange river), when the remarkable indifference to my approach, evinced by my intended victim, kindled my suspicion, and a closer investigation revealed to me the startling fact that the ostrich was a prisoner, having fastened round its ankles two stout ivory rings connected by a thick plaited rope or thong, scarcely two feet long, composed

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of raw hide. At that instant I was surprised by the sight of eight naked, greasy Hottentots, armed with javelins, bows and poisoned arrows, starting up from the ground within twenty yards of the ostrich. None of my servants being within call to act as interpreter, I withdrew without excusing myself for the intrusion, and looking rather foolish.

Nevertheless I got out of the dilemma better than did a certain young lieutenant in the British army in a regiment stationed at a place in Southern India. An inveterate sportsman, he went out hunting whenever he could get off duty. One day, while going cautiously through the jungles, he was startled by the loud crashing of banches in a thicket near where he was moving. Stealthily approaching the locality, he suddenly confronted the huge form of an elephant busily browsing the leaves of the trees. Anxious to add to his glory that of bagging the giant of the forest, he blazed away at him, and crash! down went the elephant, to the intense delight of the young Nimrod; but in his death struggle the poor brute kicked violently, and in doing so furiously rattled and jingled a heavy iron chain encircling one of his feet; the terrible dismay of our hero may be imagined, as almost simultaneously a couple of Hindoo "mahouts" (elephant drivers) appeared on the scene, yelling, gesticulating, and tearing their "puggarees" into shreds in the frenzy of their grief and distress. The rest is soon told. Our hero made his way back to camp with downcast looks and giant strides, but was harassed all the way by a violently excited crowd of gesticulating, lamenting natives. He was sued for damages by the owner of the elephant, who placed the amount at four thousand rupees ($2000 gold); but the slaughtered animal having been in realty worth only half that sum, the judge gave the plaintiff

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judgment in two thousand rupees. Begging pardon of my readers for this "intermezzo" I resume the thread of my narrative. The ostrich, being a creature much better known than the wild ass, no description is needed. As may well be supposed we declined to become the purchasers of either, though they were offered to us at a very low price. We had quite trouble enough to conduct our caravan safely to the shores of the Mediterranean without the unnecessary addition of an improvised menagerie. It was most fortunate for us that none of the "go-ahead" Von Maltitz or some other enterprising "Dutch African" settlers accompanied our caravan, as they would have insisted on taking at least the ostriches with us; for it is not a generally known, but is a positive fact that the "Boers" (Dutch African settlers of South African birth) have proved that ostrich farming in South Africa is infinitely more lucrative than sheep farming, owing to the continually increasing demand for ostrich feathers, and as the ostrich is a bird of very hardy nature—thrives in places where almost any living thing would starve to death; requires scarcely any care, and has many other advantages over the sheep—many sheep farmers have turned their attention to raising ostriches. They either barter with the Hottentots for young ostriches, as also with other tribes in the interior of South Africa, who capture them on the plains, or they obtain ostrich eggs and hatch them either with the domesticated ostrich, or by artificial means. The orginators of ostrich farming were the Messrs. Von Maltitz Bros. of Hopetown, Cape Colony, who owned and bred a large number of these birds, which were kept in a vast corral hundreds of acres in extent, enclosed by a high palisade or fence. The male birds furnish the most valuable feathers, but the females make up for their

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inferiority of plumage by the production of eggs which are readily bought up or hatched on the premises.

By the time we returned to camp, after our inspection of the animals above described, it was too late to resume our journey that day. We therefore passed the night at the foot of the old romantic fortress, and resumed our march about sunrise next morning.

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XXIV.

ABOUT DIABEKIR.

Village of Pigeons—Poor "Laird"—Hussein Keif Fortress—Grandeur of Diabekir—The French Consul—Entering the Citadel—The Kahn—Closing the Gates for the Night—Consulate's Residence—An Evening's Entertainment—Diabekir by Moonlight—Heralding the Approach of Day—Eastern Market—Mishnooni.

Our road led us along the ridge of a long chain of low, gravelly hills, until we suddenly saw a small village of about twenty houses built on the bank of the small river near the source of which we had been encamped the night before, and which waters the western base of the chain of hills over which we were then travelling, and thence winds its course in a north-easterly direction to join the river Tigris. From our lofty position we could look right down upon the roofs of the houses, which appeared to us unusually large compared with the miserable structures which are everywhere to be met with outside of the chief towns. It did not take us long to reach the village which greatly attracted our curiosity, for here we found it composed of large, well-built houses constructed entirely of stone, most of them two, and even three stories high, and to all appearance of Persian architecture. Notwithstanding their being still in very good repair, the entire village seemed to have been abandoned by man and beast; for not a single human being could we discover on our march through this strange place, although our caravan duly announced its presence everywhere by the loud jingling of the numerous bells attached to the neck of every mule and "gheddish," pack-horse of

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the caravan, as well as by the frequent neighing of our horses, and the noisy chattering of our men. Hitherto, whenever we had marched through a hamlet, village or town, we had attracted crowds of eager spectators; not so, however, in this solitary place, where not a living creature stirred, except thousands and thousands of domestic pigeons, of every imaginable plumage, from the snowy white to the brilliant black, congregated in groups on every roof, nook and corner outside and inside of these buildings. The loud cooing by such an immense number of little throats created quite a peculiar, rumbling noise, echoing weirdly and monotonously through the spacious halls of the deserted buildings, and indeed throughout the entire atmosphere which seemed to hang gloomily over the mysterious place.

Our Arabs, superstitious, like all uncivilized people, had shown a perceptible uneasiness in our march through the deserted village, for their usual boisterous conversation suddenly stopped, and their temporary silence was only broken by an occasional murmur or low whisper; nay, they actually hastened their progress and hardly dared to look around them. Quite unintentionally, and I might say foolishly, I gave them a terrible fright, which came near degenerating into a general stampede of the poor fellows. In order fully to ascertain whether there were any human beings to be stirred up in the dismal place, I, as we had reached about the centre of the village, took it into my head to fire a shot. Unperceived by anybody, I adjusted my gun, and wantonly fired into the air. If a thunderbolt had burst it could not have caused greater commotion; for before the loud report of the gun had re-echoed from the high rocks lining the opposite side of the river which ran behind the village, dense clouds of pigeons rose into the air above our

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heads, while columns of them, intermixed with large and small bats, poured wildly out from every opening of the deserted buildings, like volumes of smoke from a building on fire. But if my shot created an excitement among the cooing pigeons and drowsy bats, it created quite as much in our caravan; horses reared, riders were thrown, and heavily laden mules, as well as terror-stricken men turned right about and bolted, to the great dismay of our party, especially my own; for although far from intending any mischief, I had nearly succeeded in causing serious accidents by my untimely shot, whose triple echo through that gloomy, cliff-bound village, startled even myself. Signor P. very properly censured my indiscretion; but knowing that no harm was meant, he soon burst out laughing, and acknowledged that he, too, had been quite startled, and expressed his surprise that so loud a demonstration had not brought forth a living creature—not even a dog—except the bats and pigeons. Henceforth our Arabs insisted that the village was haunted.

We had not travelled many miles beyond the "Pigeonopolis," when our caravan was suddenly brought to a standstill by a serious accident which befell two of our men. The majority of them, considering themselves by this time well out of reach of the evil spirits haunting the village, had regained their speech, and were eagerly discussing the probable cause of the inhabitants abandoning such a well-built place, when one of the grooms, Saïd, who, as usual, was leading a horse by the bridle, inadvertently allowed his animal to bring its nose into too close proximity with the hind-quarters of one directly in front of him. The natural consequence was that the latter uttered a piercing yell, and lashed out furiously with his hind feet, and struck poor Saïd in the stomach, which

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prostrated him instantly. Ishmael, another groom, and a bosom friend of the injured man, regardless of his own safety, stooped to raise his friend and was floored himself by a vicious kick on his shoulder. Had the horse been shod in the European or American manner, both men must have been dangerously, if not fatally injured; but, having the light and thin Arab shoe, the damage was not very serious, although it took Saïd some time to recover his breath, and the other fellow's shoulder caused him such agony that he could no longer walk, and had to be placed in the saddle. Saïd, suffering intense pain, was also disabled, and was placed on horseback. Signor P. humanely ordered the caravan to move very slowly, to spare unnecessary suffering to our injured men, and determined to encamp for the day at the nearest place where water could be obtained.

We soon reached another small tributary of the river Tigris, where we stopped and encamped in close proximity to a few dwellings which stood near the spot where we crossed the rivulet. Here our two invalids were duly doctored, in the regular Arab style, by the liberal application of cold water to the bruises, and before nightfall they were so far restored as to be able to participate in the everlasting tattle of the Arabs when seated around their camp-fires. As may be supposed, the principal topic of their conversation that night ran on the events of the day, and, having learned from the people near whose houses we were encamped, that the deserted village was actually haunted, they all, of course, ascribed the accident to the influence of the evil spirits who, they argued, must have been irate at my wanton shot.

According to our charts, we were only a short day's journey from Diabekir, and, being anxious to get there early to have ample time to look up comfortable

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quarters, as we intended to rest our caravan a few days in that city, it was arranged that we should start early the next morning. By daybreak, everybody in camp was wide awake and getting ready for the road. The early morning air was quite cold, owing to a thick fog, which chilled our thinly clad Arab grooms, who were unaccustomed to such bracing weather, to their very marrow We had not been traveling very far, however, when the damp mist dissolved into a drizzling rain, which continued until sunrise, when the atmosphere became transparent again, and unveiled to our view the beautiful green valley of the upper Tigris. From the snow-covered mountain peaks, where lies the source of this mighty river, to the perpendicular rocks upon the almost inaccessible crest of which rests the picturesque fortress of "Hussein Keif," or Hesu Keifa, *i. e.*, Hussian's Delight, notorious for its brigand population, the mammoth rock on which stands the castle, rising abruptly, with overawing grandeur, from the river, to a height of nearly eight hundred feet, and seeming to threaten annihilation to the travelers on the river by toppling down on them. Some ten miles distant, partially screened from our view by a projecting hill covered with a luxuriant growth of bushes and trees, towered the imposing but gloomy-looking, dark gray basalt walls of the town and fortress of Diarbekir, bristling with strong battlements, loop-holed watch-towers, lofty, slender minarets, and glittering roofs of mosques. Instead of following the rugged right bank of the Tigris, we crossed the river at a very shallow place, and advanced upon Diarbekir along the left bank, where the road became more passable.

Observing that the gravelly banks of the river teemed with wild ducks, geese and other water fowl, I resolved to ride along close by the river, while the

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caravan followed the regular route. By the time I had reached the high granite bridge which crosses the Tigris about a mile below the city, I had bagged sixteen fine ducks and geese, and might have secured many more if I had been so inclined; for, to my surprise, these birds seemed to be totally ignorant of the effects of gunpowder and shot; wherefore, I concluded that the denizens of Diarbekir must be either too lazy to go out shooting, or too harmless. Although ignorant of the whereabouts of the caravan, having lost sight of it soon after I had crossed the river, I reached the bridge at the same time that it arrived there.

A rather steep road, flanked on the left side by the villas of Monsieur M——, the French Consul of Diarbekir, and other dignitaries of the place, and on the right by a kind of public garden or grove, led from the bridge up to the city, before the southern gate of which, at the moment of our arrival, the head of a long caravan appeared. It consisted of heavily-laden and gigantic Kûrdian camels, and was issuing from the gate, much to our disgust, for we knew by the slow, phlegmatic movements of the ponderous animals, that it would take fully an hour for only two hundred of them to pass out of the gate, which was so narrow that we did not like to venture in while these leviathans were passing out, for fear of crushing our valuable horses, as well as ourselves. Vainly hoping that the caravan might be less numerous than it appeared, we waited for half an hour, casting an occasional side glance upon a troop of shabbily uniformed Turkish soldiers, who were put through their drill by a few bow-legged, blear-eyed old officers.

Just as we were disgusted with waiting, and about to proceed to the eastern gate of the fortress, our lucky star brought along a well-dressed European

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gentleman wearing a fine Panama hat, and mounted on a splendid charger richly caparisoned. At the right and left of this horseman walked, or rather trotted, two uniformed cavasses armed to the teeth. This gentleman proved to be the French Consul, who was on his way to his office in the city, and having been informed by mail, by the French Consul at Bagdad, that a caravan conveying superb Arab horses for his majesty, the Emperor of the French, was on its way to Diarbekir, he at once introduced himself to us in his official capacity, and received our letters of introduction. Thereupon he rode up to the Turkish officers (the soldiers presenting arms as he approached), and politely requested the officer in command to clear the gate. The soldiers, however, did not need to act alone, for as soon as the gate-keepers saw the approach of the Consul, they set to work, with alacrity, to stop the exodus of the camels. This, however, was not an easy task, as camels, like sheep, insist upon following their leaders, wherever they go. In spite of all the yelling and gesticulating of the gate-keepers and soldiers, the obstinate brutes would not be kept back, and threatened to trample their antagonists into a jelly beneath their ponderous feet, until, as a last resort, the iron gate was closed, and the foremost of the camels driven into a side street, where all the rest followed; then the gates were opened, and the soldiers again presented arms to the Consul; as he entered at the head of our caravan, the gate-keepers saluted him with a deep salaam, and we found ourselves in Diarbekir, marching in Indian file through the dirty narrow street, over the slippery paving stones which were intersected here and there by deep holes and mud-puddles. Brushing past, and running foul of the camels, which, being heavy laden, were obliged either to come in contact with us, or the

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sides of the houses, it became necessary to keep one's "weather eye open:" not to be ground to powder. From the numerous obstructions it must have been over an hour before we reached the gate of the French consulate, which was a large, massive stone building. Here a miscellaneous crowd of spectators was assembled, and scanned us with evident curiosity, for which they had ample time, as we had to await the arrival of the Armenian merchant, who was agent for my brother-in-law of Bagdad, and for whom we were obliged to send a man to search through the bazaar. On his arrival, we presented our credentials, whereupon he sent for his horse, and piloted us through the entire city, and thence through the northern gate to Sibby (or "Chibby") khan, a large well-built caravansary some two miles beyond the town, which he had engaged for our special accommodation, and had, with laudable forethought, caused it to be cleaned and made habitable for civilized people. We were soon installed in our own temporary quarters and rendered as comfortable as circumstances would permit. Although these were the best quarters we had had since we left Mossul, our obliging host thought that they were not good enough for Signor P. and the author of his book (Father M., the only other European member of the caravan having accepted the hospitality of a Catholic priest, who was at the consulate at the time of our arrival) insisted, upon our taking up our residence at his dwelling, which offer Signor P. thankfully declined, pleading his duty to the caravan as an excuse. He however suggested the propriety of my accepting the invitation, as my presence in the khan was less necessary. Conforming to the wishes of my venerable friend, I vaulted into the saddle, and returned with the Armenian to town to spend the night at his residence. We had to strike

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into a brisk canter to reach town before sunset, at which time its gates were closed for the night. We had not a moment to lose and galloped up to the gate just in time to slip in. Almost simultaneously with the closure of the gates, the plaintive chorus of all the muëzzins of Diarbekir echoed solemnly through the air. The bustle in the streets rapidly decreased, especially in the various bazaars where the shop-keepers were busily fastening shutters and doors with iron bars, and huge old fashioned padlocks. Here and there a solitary "sakka" (water-carrier) or a burly "hammal" (heavy porter), barefooted, scantily attired and tired to death by hard work and privation, staggered on towards his hovel eagerly counting, by the fast fading light, his few coppers, the hard earnings of his precarious calling; and thus absorbed in thought almost stumbling upon a couple of closely veiled Moslem women, who, preceded by a negro eunuch bearing a lantern, were wrapped from head to heel in the voluminous folds of their dark colored silken "csars" (shrouds), their feet encased in yellow, loose fitting leather boots, with toes upturned and gaudily tasselled boot legs reaching nearly to the knee. The gait of these women might be compared to ducks waddling toward the water. Scenes like this were, however, too familiar for us to attract our attention to any extent, and I was kept on the "*qui vive*" in following my host through the labyrinth of narrow, tortuous, uneven streets, until we finally brought up at his residence. It was a large, massive edifice of dark basalt, a hard coarse-grained kind of stone much used in the principal buildings of that district, and which by its sombre hue gives the town and fortifications of Diarbekir a very gloomy and uninviting appearance.

The residence of my host was, like that of the French Consulate, constructed strictly in conformity

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with Oriental nations, *i. e.*, with scarcely a window opening on the street, and was a huge pile of masonry built as if it were intended to last forever. Although these Mesopotamian dwellings cover a considerable area of ground, their accommodations for human beings are decidedly limited, because the greater part of the space is occupied by the court yard; the actual accommodations of the house consisting of two verandahs, or halls, one above the other, and facing the courtyard, with a chamber or two at each end of the verandahs; a flat roof (which is used as a promenade and sleeping place), and a "serdap," or deep, vaulted basement as a place of refuge for the inmates of the house during the hottest hours of the daytime. The latter apartment is not frequently met with in houses north of Diarbekir. A peculiar rap at the ponderous door by my host caused the heavy bolts to be withdrawn, and the swarthy, shrivelled face of an aged but still athletic servitor appeared. Recognizing his master, he threw open the door, and we passed through into the spacious courtyard dimly lighted by a stable lantern, placed upon the ground, near several horses, which were drawn up in a line along the wall at the further end. We then dismounted, the old servant taking charge of our horses. Following the master of the house up two steps, I found myself in a spacious open hall facing the courtyard, and the proprietor invited me to be seated on the divan or lounge which ran around the wall, when he disappeared into one of the side chambers. A young negro girl then entered the hall, and lighted a number of lamps, some of them hanging by cords from the ceiling, others fastened to the walls, and their light heightened by large metallic reflectors, soon illuminated the hall, as well as the whole courtyard in front, almost as effectually as the sun could have done. A

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table, covered with a cloth of magnificent Persian embroidery, was then brought in by servants and placed in the centre of the hall. Even the most opulent of the natives of the East seldom use tables, being accustomed to take their meals sitting on the ground or lying face downwards on pillows or bolsters around the tray or vessel which contains their food, and which is usually placed on a piece of matting in lieu of a table. After the absence of but a few moments my host returned, elegantly dressed, in Oriental costume. He politely asked me to excuse him for leaving me alone, and added that his mother, wife, and sister would soon be there to welcome me.

In the meantime decanters filled with wine and "raki" (arrack) were brought in and served in large glasses. I did not like to taste it, as I had not tasted food since daybreak, and I feared that the strong Diarbekir wine, and the still stronger alcoholic "raki" taken into my famished stomach would intoxicate me; but as it is considered an insult by the Orientals to refuse a drink or gift of any description, I accepted and emptied a glass of wine. A moment later, the ladies of the house entered, and made a most reverential salâam, and one of them, the wife of my host, even mustered courage enough to approach and shake hands with me. They were attired in the height of Armenian female fashion; a tight fitting robe with sleeves increasing in width from the elbow downwards; this robe reaches from the neck to about six inches below the knee, and is cut wide open from the throat to the waist, which opening is covered by a chemisette of gauze richly embroidered with a gay colored silk or gold thread, and sometimes ornamented with ruffles. A silken scarf encircles the waist of those in full costume. Pajâmas, white stockings and leather slippers

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without heels complete the dress. The brilliantly black, or dark brown luxuriant hair of the Armenian woman is generally worn in plaits or broad braids falling down between the shoulders, and in some instances reaching almost to their feet. The head-dress is a little round silken cap, with a very low crown, from the centre of which dangles a large silk tassel.

Another head-dress is a bright-colored, thin silk scarf, wound turban fashion round the head. The former head-dress is almost exclusively worn by young girls, while the other is more used by matrons and elderly females. Armenian women appear to care less about trinkets and jewelry than the fair Moslems, being generally satisfied with wearing a small quantity; while the latter, if they can afford it, wear jewelry not only on their foreheads, ears, necks, wrists and fingers, but frequently on their toes, and even in their noses! Many of them, especially those of India and Egypt, wearing golden ornaments in the form of a little rosette or star (sometimes set with pearls or precious stones) on the outer cartilage of the left nostril, fastened by a screw attached to the reverse side of the ornament. In Mesopotamia this nose ornament is rather small, scarcely larger than a gold dollar; but in India and Egypt they are the size and shape of a large ear-ring, or of a small padlock, fairly covering the entire left half of the wearer's mouth. Though the nose is unquestionably a very conspicuous place for an ornament, the wearing of jewels in the nostril is not at all to my taste, or of any civilized being; yet I doubt that if the whilom creator of fashion, the Empress Eugenie, had taken it into her head, the wearing of such an ornament, whether her sisters would have hesitated to follow her example, as they did the equally ludicrous and barbarian chignon and crinoline.

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It was evident that the female relatives of my host, his wife at least, had been somewhat in civilized society, or had a little more cultivation than is usual with Mesopotamian women; for but little of that awkward shyness, and tiresome reticence, so characteristic of the untutored, penned-up women of the Orient, was noticeable in them. On the contrary, they readily answered my questions; the lady of the house, especially, became quite talkative and fairly overwhelmed me with questions concerning my brother-in-law, Mr. W., of Bagdad; and his wife, my sister, who had about three years previously stayed at this house a few days, in course of their journey from Switzerland to Bagdad. My fair interlocutor was quite a handsome woman, apparently scarcely twenty years of age, gifted with more than the average intelligence of Oriental ladies, and like all women in good circumstances in that country rather inclined to embonpoint. Her sister-in-law was a good looking girl, about fifteen years old, somewhat delicate in health; and her mother-in-law was a happy, motherly old lady with snow white hair. As to my host, he was a man of about twenty-five years, but, like most Orientals, looking much older. Rather small in stature, he was remarkably lively and intelligent, and a shrewd business man. A substantial supper was promptly served, greatly to my relief; for the fiery wine gulped down began to make me feel rather dizzy, and I was well aware that the best antidote for it was a "set-to" with knife and fork. Consequently I offered little resistance to the invitation of my entertainer to "sit down and consider myself at home;" but on looking round for the ladies of the house to ask them to be seated first, they were gone, it not being customary for the Eastern women to take their meals with men, not even with their own male relatives; moreover,

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there were knives, forks, and spoons upon the table, implements which very few of the natives of the Orient know how to handle, and in consequence do not care to use them in the presence of Europeans. Even my host declined to sit down, for, as he afterwards acknowledged, the same reason; but seeing that I was determined to leave the table to its fate, and that it was a clear case of "*sine qua non*," he changed his tactics, sat down to the table, and commenced with a will. My ravenous appetite scarcely permitted me to cast occasionally a furtive glance at the gastronomic movements of my *vis-a-vis*, who, by the way, wielded the implements named with greater ease than I had expected, though he had probably not touched them since the before-mentioned visit of my brother-in-law; for although they are now to be found in the houses of the rich of the East, they are used only when Europeans are present. After supper, the inevitable fenchân of coffee, "shattab" (a long stemmed pipe with large round amber mouthpiece), and "narghileh" were served, and half an hour later, my host perceiving my fatigue, asked me whether I preferred to sleep on the roof, in a chamber, or in the dining hall. I chose the latter, and instantly a bed was spread for me, and such a bed! The quilts and pillows were covered with sky-blue silk, and of delicious softness.

I could not help smiling as I thought of my dust-covered, mud-stained self, deposited on a couch fit to receive the form of a Sultan; but objections were all over-ruled, and into the bed I dived, just as I stood, barring my hat, jack-boots and spurs, and in less than five minutes I was fast asleep. When I opened my eyes in the morning, the cheerful voice of Signor P. rang a rousing "bon jour," into my ears. He had kept his word faithfully, and had called early that we

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might take a stroll through the city. The Armenian having urgent business to attend to, could not accompany us, but said he would meet us in the bazaar, where, like the majority of the merchants of the city, he owned shops or stores filled with dry goods and other merchandise. Mounting our horses we started on our tour of inspection. Our first point of destination was the provision bazaar, where Signor P. had ordered a few of the mukāries (muleteers) to wait for him with their beasts of burden, in order to transport the provisions which he intended to buy for the use of the caravan.

After passing through a quarter of the city, where well built, substantial houses of basalt-stone were prevalent, apparently the most respectable part of Diarbekir, the scenery about us suddenly assumed a different character; houses of decent appearance seemed more and more scarce, and in their stead we saw only small, one story buildings roughly constructed of unhewn stone cemented with a mixture of clay and short hair or straw, and uninviting in appearance both inside and outside. Here we passed a spacious yard, shut off from the street by a high, but tottering wall, which had a large gate; but although the door was closed, the prevalence of a strong odor which emanted from it at once demostrated that it was a camel's stable. Almost adjoining it is the thriving establishment of a "cahuejee" (dispenser of coffee), derived from the Arabic cahuēh, anglice coffee, where a heterogeneous crowd of Turkish soldiers, camel drivers, mukāries, negroes, Albanese and Turcoman zeptiēhs, Kürdian hammals, cavasses, horse mongers, Greek, Turkish, Persian, Arabian, Armenian and Jewish merchants, etc., lounge in every position, some mute and immovable as statues, others gesticulating and noisily convers-

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ing; but all of them, without exception, evidently enjoying their coffee, and smoking their pipes in spite of the close proximity of the fetid stables. Adjoining the coffee house we saw a long row of rough, wooden sheds, the woodwork split and crisp from the effects of rain, the sun, and old age, and in many places perforated by the destructive wood-worm and white ant. Yet those unsightly shanties were alive from early morning till sunset with a most industrious and skilful community; for there the raw material of cotton, sheep's wool, Angora goat's hair, and silk, undergoes all the various processes requisite to transform it into the merchandise so celebrated throughout the Orient.

Here we see hundreds of men, women and children engaged in ginning cotton, carding wool and hair, spinning, bleaching, dyeing, printing, weaving, etc., etc.; and all these various manipulations are performed with implements and machines, so simple and old-fashioned, as to leave no doubt that most of them are of the same pattern as those in use with the ancient Assyrians and Egyptians; indeed, many implements used to this day by the manufacturers of Diarbekir, as well as by the population throughout Mesopotamia, are faithfully represented, and can be easily recognized on the bas-reliefs and obelisks discovered at Persepolis, Babylon, Nineveh, Luxor, Heliopolis or Thebes. Opposite those factories could be seen the small workshops of the knights of the needle and scissors, and those of the disciples of St. Crispin, the majority of them engaged in mending articles peculiar to their trade, and which were in many cases hardly fit to put into the absorbing basket of the ragman; yet these artizans had a number of their customers around them patiently awaiting their amended outfit; while close by the proprietors of greasy barber-shops manipulated

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with astonishing *sang-froid* the heads of their victims, mostly Moslems, lathering and shaving, or rather scraping *with the same brush and razor*, the obnoxious, quick growing bristles on the scalps of the Moslem millionaire and the negro slave.

Further on we passed open sheds used as restaurants, where the proprietors and their assistants dispensed for a few Paras (a copper coin of the value of one-ninth of an American cent), miscellaneous rations of broth, slices of mutton, goat's flesh, cooked rice, vegetables, and a sort of salad, or pickle. These were served from sooty kettles, and greasy tubs; in wooden bowls and tin plates. Their customers were usually the poorest and most ragged part of the population. They were, as may be supposed, not at all fastidious, but on the other hand they consumed their rations with enviable appetite and good nature, notwithstanding the stifling smoke and hot steam of those abominable kitchens. We passed by in succession the workshops of tinkers, cutlers, coppersmiths, locksmiths, etc., etc., all vieing with each other which should make the most noise, rendering conversation practically impossible in their immediate neighborhood, and the street anything but a pleasant quarter for nervous people. Riding on, we reached the entrance of a long arch-way or vault, a passage of massive mason work, lighted from above by a number of large open sky-lights, through which fresh air also found admittance, and whitewashed to improve the light. The air within was remarkably cool, and rendered it a pleasant abode in very hot weather.

The passage was thirty feet wide and twenty-five high, and was lined on each side by niches which were tenanted by rope-makers, saddlers, turners in wood, horn, ivory, and metal; engravers, grocers, apothecaries, physicians, scribes, money changers, distillers,

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and in fact dealers in every kind of merchandise. In the Orient all business is transacted in the bazaar or market; even tradesmen do not follow their vocation at home. Each tradesman, merchant, or dealer has his stall or workshop in the bazaar, where, during the daytime, he is always to be found, returning to his family only at sunset; when business is suspended until sunrise the next morning. Another characteristic of Oriental cities is, that all merchants or tradesmen following the same, or similar line of business, occupy shops or stalls in close proximity to each other, while every one knows that in civilized countries it is just the reverse. For instance, in this country, if a shoemaker has the imaginary misfortune of having a supposed rival open a shop in his immediate vicinity, he thinks that his business will be injured thereby, and will either sell out, or remove if he can, or annoy the other until he drives him to more congenial quarters; indeed, the only people who appear to do business in the same line, right next door to each other,—and thrive,—are the Israelites, who doubtless have inherited this business method from their Oriental ancestry.

In my opinion this Eastern custom is preferable to our own, for if you want to buy an article in a bazaar, there is but one locality in which to search for it, and, when there, you have the advantage of immediately comparing the price and quality of every article of the kind you wish, and knowing there is no other place in the town where it is sold, you are thus spared the trouble and fatigue of going from one end of the city to the other.

I have said that some of the stalls were occupied by scribes—a sort of notary public who occupy themselves with all sorts of writing, such as drawing up bills of sale, deeds, contracts, accounts, receipts, mem-

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oranda, etc.; writing, copying, or translating letters, or, indeed, manuscript of any description. They are under oath not to divulge anything that comes to their knowledge in this way; and owe to their clients' ignorance much more of their success, than do our lawyers and notaries, because the majority of the people of the Orient cannot read or write their own language, to say nothing of a foreign one, so that they depend exclusively on this serviceable class of men. It is done for recompense of course, but the charges are so small that their services are within the reach of even the poorest of the population.

In Spain, Italy and France there is also a large percentage of the people unable to read or write, and the scribes of those countries derive a fair income by conducting the correspondence between lovers alone, independent of what they make from other writing. Upon emerging from the vaulted bazaar, we found ourselvs under the roofs of an uninterrupted row of spacious open sheds, the wood-work of which was almost black from exposure to sun and rain. This was the provision bazaar, which, together with the horse, mule, donkey, cattle, sheep, goat and poultry market adjoining, was a Babylon in extent, and a Bedlam in confusion. As if to heighten the general chaos, part of this bazaar is located in a quarter of the city where the narrowest and most crooked streets seemed to concentrate, thus rendering it almost as hopeless a task for anybody not born and bred in that market to find the outlet, as it must have been to find that of the Cretan labyrinth Here we found immense quantities of musk and watermelons, pumpkins, egg-plants, cucumbers and a variety of other vegetables piled up in every direction and almost blocking the narrow thoroughfare.

There lay heaps of delicious grapes, figs, pome-

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granates, oranges, lemons, etc.; and further on camel loads of dates, pistāchios, almonds, rasins, curranta, ginger, wild bees' honey, milk, and liquid butter,* cheese, eggs, etc. Further on we found vendors of flour, grain and feed; and last, but not least, the dealers in domestic animals of all kinds, except the pig, an animal unknown in the land of the Moslem in its domestic state, and an outcast under any circumstances with both Mussulman and Hebrew; and the Christian of that country dare not raise it for fear of being lynched by the fanatics. Declared unclean both by Moses and Mohammed, the porcine species has ever since been shunned and cursed by the orthodox of each creed.

Having now furnished a minute description of the locality of the bazaar, I beg the reader to depict to himself the same place, permeated with all kinds of odors from sunrise to sunset, and thronged with a heterogenous crowd of human beings, young and old, rich and poor, male and female, arrayed in every imaginable variety of Oriental costume, and intermingled more or less with the variety of specimens of the animal world before-mentioned, and he will see a true and singular picture.

During our progress through the bazaar we were hailed by men belonging to our caravan. All of them had that morning received part of their wages, so that they might enjoy themselves in their own way, and provide themselves with tobacco and other trifles which they might require. Lucky dogs, these fellows, with their features radiant at the thought of having a few piasters in their pockets, and hardly knowing what to do with them; for the cares and wants of these children of nature are so few and trifling, and their "keif"

* These three latter articles are brought to the market in air tight bags of goat's skin.

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(merry-making or amusement) usually so innocent and inexpensive—their disposition naturally so happy and content—that they may well be classed among the most enviable of human beings. These men piloted us to the spot where the mukāries were awaiting us with their mules and pack-horses. Then began the purchase of provisions for the members of our caravan, and of barley for our horses and mules sufficient to last until we reached Suverek, or Severek, a town of some importance about forty-five miles southwest of Diarbekir. This accomplished, the mukāries started with their loads towards home; that is, for the khan. The "saïs" (grooms) got leave of absence until noon, and we (Signor P. and I) continued our ramble through the city.

While pushing our way out of the bazaar, we noticed a peculiarily repulsive specimen of those deplorable beings, known throughout Lower Mesopotamia as "mishnoonis," *i. e.*, idiots or fools (derived from the Arabic "mishnoon," foolish, crazy, idiotic). As his name indicates, this scum (for humanity's sake I should prefer to call them "these mental wrecks of humanity," if I could; but I regret to say that there are a good many sham idiots among them) is supposed to be mentally deranged, and consequently irresponsible for his acts; goes about in public in a state of nudity; wallows in dirt, filth, and vermin; like the pariah dog of the Orient is without home or shelter; makes himself at home anywhere where his presence is suffered; wanders day and night about the streets of the cities without aim or purpose; satisfying the wants of nature wherever and whenever he experiences necessity; is either unable to talk, or shams dumbness; and either is, or feigns to be, utterly ignorant of decency; is, in short, a mere animal in human form. The superstitious Moslem is inspired with awe, mingled with

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pity, for the really wretched object, and a dread to interfere with a creature afflicted by omnipotent wisdom, lest he who did so should be visited by the Divine wrath. It is remarkable that I never saw a female "mishnoon" in that country.

The Christian and Jew, though compassionating the miserable creature, are naturally shocked by his loathsome appearance, and avoid him whenever it is possible; but they are afraid to treat him ungently, even under great provocation, for they are greatly outnumbered by the fanatic Moslems whose protection he enjoys to so great an extent. Conscious of this immunity, the "mishnoon," whether genuine or false, knows scarcely any restriction. If he is hungry he will stray into any house the door of which is not fastened, and help himself to anything in the shape of food that he can lay hands on; or, if he chooses, will grab any food exposed for sale, which he may fancy, being only gently led away if he attempts to carry off more than is necessary to appease his appetite. To prevent their goods being handled by the filthy vagabond, the proprietors generally take him by the forelock, and present him with a slice, a handful, or a few, according to the nature of the article he covets, before he has time to help himself to it; and as he always appears in nature's garb alone, and of course never has a basket or any vessel to carry his food in, because that would show some degree of sanity, he generally trots off satisfied with a mouthful. The creature being allowed to follow all his impulses unchecked is an unspeakable nuisance.

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XXV.

"KARA AMID."

Ancient Amida—Silk and Leather—Religious Dance—Resuming our Journey—The Mountains—Turkish Mail—Ascending the Mountains—Encamped among Nomadic Koords—Koordian Chief—Distributing Presents—Farewell to Kara Amid.

Signor P. and I spent the greater part of the day in inspecting the metropolis of Koordistan; the "Kara Amid," (Black Amid) of the Turks; so called, in all probability on account of the dark and sombre aspect of the principle quarter of the town, but especially of the strong, lofty, stone walls, crested everywhere with battlements and built of the same black basalt which gives to Diarbekir its gloomy appearance. The town or fortress is almost quadrangular, with the corners of the quadrangle rounded off. Each side of the quadrangle is pierced by an arched gate, finely ornamented with Arabesques, and inscriptions of Saracenic origin. The ponderous wooden doors of these gates are covered inside and outside with thick plates of wrought iron riveted together with strong iron bolts.

Diarbekir is said to have formerly contained a population of two hundred thousand, but to-day its inhabitants probably do not number over forty thousand, of whom three quarters are Moslems; chiefly Turks, and the remainder are Jews, Armenians, and a few Greeks and Roman Catholics. It contains a number of fine large mosques, spacious khans or caravanseries; five or six Christian churches and convents; one or two Jewish synagogues, and its bazaars, still very extensive, were formerly classed among the richest of the Orient. The

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decline of the latter, and as a natural consequence, that of the population is mainly due to the lawless, predatory disposition of some of the Kürdish tribes, who, during the course of the last century, have been in the habit of attacking and plundering the numerous caravans, which have hitherto been the principal mediums of commercial intercourse between the two great commercial centres, Aleppo and Bagdad. A century ago, when Diarbekir was in the zenith of its grandeur, it was one of the chief silk markets of the East; deriving most of its raw material from Persia and manufacturing the same into the costliest fabrics; at the same time that it had an extensive manufacture of cotton goods, leather ware, cutlery, fire arms, etc., and the goods were famous for their superior quality.

At the present day however, the manufacture of silk and leather is the chief occupation of the people. A considerable proportion of the inhabitant is engaged in the carrying business either by means of beasts of burden or by "keleks," the roughly constructed, wooden rafts, supported by "looloothe" (inflated bags of goat skin,) which I described in an earlier part of this work, as being constructed in Diarbekir for the purpose of floating passengers, merchandise, building material and firewood from Diarbekir, down the river to Mossul, Bagdad, and the intermediate places along the river. Diarbekir is not only the capital of Kürdistan, but was once the seat of the "pashalic" (province) of Diarbekir, the pasha residing in a huge stone building, situated near the heart of the city. In former times, the pasha's residence was in the citadel; which is in the north-eastern part of the city, but it is now in ruins like a great many other buildings of the place. Kara Amid is a strong military post of the Turkish government, and garrisoned all the year around, by

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from three hundred to twelve hundred men of the standing army.

Amida, the ancient Diarbekir was a place of importance even in the times of the Romans, who wrested it from the possession of the Persians, and held it for a long time. In the year 502 A. D., this stronghold again fell into the hands of the Persians, who, on recapturing it, killed no less than eighty thousand of its inhabitants. Being a perpetual bone of contention it passed through a great many vicissitudes until the Turks under Sultan Selim conquered it in the year 1515, A. D., and kept possession of it. The country around Diarbekir is fertile, but the climate is not considered very healthy, fever and ague being very prevalent, during certain seasons of the year. But very few Europeans reside there, and the positions of the British and French consuls in that place, though scarcely involving official labor, are not coveted, as Diarbekir is known to be a dreadfully dull place by Europeans in general.

During the course of the evening of our third days' sojourn at Diarbekir, Signor P. and I, happening to be at the house of the Armenian who had so hospitably entertained me on the night of our arrival in town, witnessed the final act of a very interesting scene, from the roof of the house of the Armenian. It was a religious dance performed by five or six "dervishes" on a large carpet spread in the centre of the courtyard of an adjoining building, which happened to be one of their convents. Unfortunately the ceremonies were just about closing, before we were informed of them; moreover being aware of the fanatical character of this religious brotherhood, and fearful of getting our landlord into trouble with them, by letting them become aware of their being watched by unbelievers, we did not dare

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to look down upon them openly, and had to satisfy our curiosity by peeping through a hole in the wall; and thus restrained, only a part of the scene was visible to us. All that we could see was about a half a dozen of these religious devotees, attired in long, snow-white robes of linen, or book-muslin, so voluminous and so stiffly starched as to assume the shape of a bell, or open umbrella; indeed it appeared as if a crinoline or hoop-skirt must be worn under it. The upper part of this garment, from the neck to the waist, was rather tight fitting, with a wide opening from the throat, filled by a piece of green silk, looking at a distance like a green shirt-bosom. Over this garment, the dervishes wore a short, tight-fitting white jacket stiffly starched and open in front. On their heads, they wore a yellowish-gray felt sugar-loaf hat with very narrow, up-turned brim. All these worthies wore stockings, but no shoes, and, with open hands and extended arms, danced to the music of a monotonous chant constantly decreasing, and increasing in sound and measure, each individual dancing by himself, but keeping time with the others.

Before beginning the dance, these dervishes form a large circle, and salute each other with a few reverential salaams; then swaying to and fro, with uplifted hands they take a few steps forwards, toward the centre of the carpet and backward again; then turning round and round on one spot, with the velocity of a top, they spin round like hornets shut up in a lantern, for so long a time, that it is a marvel that dizziness does not compel them to stop, or throw them down, or bring them in rough contact with each other; but again and again they perform these evolutions, and do not give in until brain and muscle cannot endure any longer, and one dancer after the other drops down exhausted, until the last of them staggers into a corner in

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a swoon; then the "dance of the dervishes" is at an end.

In addition to these saltatorian excesses committed in honor of religion by these Moslem devotees, their duties consist of almost hourly prayers, and occasional mortifications of their bodies. The latter is undoubtedly the severest of their exercises, as it required a vigorous constitution to stand all the suffering incident to the ordeal; for it consists in long fasting; tearing their beard and clothes, amid loud lamentations; scorching and scratching their skin; thumping their chest with their fists, and even with stones; ramming their heads against stone walls, besides several other modes of self-torture. The dismal, agonizing sounds uttered by them has given to them quite appropriately the name of "the howling dervishes." Dervish is a Persian word synonymous with the Arabic word "fakir," which means "poor." Fakir, however, is the term by which a similar class of religious Moslems and Hindoos are known in India.

The dervish brotherhood is divided into numerous orders, some of which are of long existence, having been established centuries ago. The members of most of these orders are abjectly poor, in obedience to the Koran which recommends poverty to the faithful, and live chiefly upon alms voluntarily tendered to them everywhere by the "true believers" in the doctrines of Mohammed the prophet, who pay their dervishes due reverence. Other orders of these devotees are richly endowed by Moslem princes, and highly respected by the faithful of all classes. Many a dervish has, in former times, been said to be quite eminent for his sagacity and wit, and a variety of very interesting anecdotes about them are in circulation, not only among Moslems, but also among Christians and Jews.

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After three days' rest in Diarbekir, and various visits from the French Consul and missionaries, and returns of their visits on our parts, it was time to resume our journey westward. It was therefore decided that we should start about noon of the fourth day, and word to this effect was sent to our traveling companion, Father M., the young Catholic priest who had taken up quarters with the missionaries. The day of our departure dawned brilliantly, and Father M. made his appearance fully prepared for the journey full two hours before the appointed time, and our caravan, after many delays, finally marched out of the kahn about eleven o'clock A. M.

Striking into the road which leads across the Karadsha-Dagh mountain chain to the town of Suverek, we briskly advanced across the tiresome, dusty plain, which lies between Diarbekir and the aforesaid mountain. Our batch of horses were rather unruly at first, as they always were when they had been well fed, and rested, both of which tended to exhilarate them, and they gave our grooms much trouble to keep them under control, several of them trying to walk on their hindlegs, like trained circus dogs, and one of them, an animal of rare beauty, but very vicious temper for an Arab horse, took every opportunity to do mischief with his teeth and hoofs; but a few miles of brisk marching in the scorching sun, and suffocating heat and dust brought them to terms.

On the plain, we met crowds of people of both sexes and all ages; some on foot; some on camels, horses, mules, donkeys, and even on the backs of bullocks; some well armed, others provided only with sticks; some without loads, others with bales, bags, vegetables, grain, and poultry; others driving cattle, sheep, etc., before them, all evidently bound to town.

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At the foot of the mountain we passed the Turkish mail, a small, rough looking cavalcade, well known to the traveler in that region. The leader of this cavalcade is worth description. He was a short, broad shouldered individual with weather beaten face, and long shaggy hair and beard, clad in a thick, coarse woolen garment; his powerful, hairy chest fully exposed to view; a rag tied turban-fashion round the greasy skull cap on his head; a short "chibook" (Turkish tobacco pipe) and tobacco pouch dangling by a string about his neck; and a heavy knot or cow-hide, by a loop from his right fore-arm; a large sheath knife, and two brass-mounted pistols, stuck in his belt; his feet, encased in large clumsy Turcoman boots, rest in huge Ottoman stirrup irons, which, being pointed at the ends, may be used as spurs. He was mounted on a small, lank gheddish (a low bred gelding), and led another (heavily laden with locked leather bags containing the mail matter) by the bridle. Both animals moved along with that peculiar, shuffling gait, known in Persia and Mesopotamia as "rhwan," and is peculiar to the Turkish mail horses, the Persian roadster, and the "hunter" of the Boer, or Dutchman, of South Africa, The individual thus described is a Tartar, like the majority of mail riders in Asiatic Turkey and Persia; as only Tartars and Turcomans can bear, and are willing to perform for small pay, the fearfully onerous work of traveling day and night, summer and winter, with scarcely any rest or interruption, through the monotonous and unsafe territories of the vast Ottoman and Persian dominions. Constantly in the saddle, day and night, they are accustomed to eat and sleep in it, and it is by no means rare to meet with one of these worthies coming along the road at his usual gait, although fast asleep.

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At a distance of from twenty to fifty yards, follows his escort of from two to six zaptiēhs of the character already described. The duty of the zaptiēh is light, compared with that of the mail rider, as they seldom have to escort the latter further than from one station to another, a distance of from thirty to forty miles, when he stops only long enough to change horses, and continues his journey with another escort to the next relay, while his late escort has to wait at the halting place for the arrival of the mail rider coming in the opposite direction. At the time of my visit, there being only a semi-monthly mail communication between Stamboul (Constantinople) and Bagdad, the zaptiēhs on the route had only once a fortnight to ride a distance of thirty miles or more, while the poor mail rider had, as I have been informed, to travel day and night the year round over the entire distance between the two cities, a journey of over twelve hundred miles.

Silently the cavalcade passed by scarcely deigning to notice us, and was soon lost to view in the cloud of dust in our rear. Then began for us the arduous ascent of the steep and rocky mountain, a comparatively easy task for the horses that were not burdened by a rider or other load; but for those that were, it was very hard. After about two hours' climbing, we reached a sort of plateau, or table-land, studded with stately shade trees, and clusters of wild jessamine, and other fragrant bushes, on which a few large, gaunt camels, some sheep, etc., were browsing in charge of a trio of ragamuffins stretched out at full length under the shady trees. On this level ground we made a short halt, only long enough to allow our weary animals to regain their breath, we, meantime, enjoying the panorama before us.

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Far away, towards the north and east, the horizon bristled with the dark and lowering mountain peaks of Kudistan and Armenia, the tallest crested with snow and ice; in the south and west laid the soiled valleys and barren yellow mountains of Tûr Abdin and the upper part of the endless, parched plains of El Jesîreh, while fully twelve miles distant the huge, sombre quadrangle Diarbekir loomed up with a long string of dark spots moving slowly toward it. These of course were the people and animals we had met on the road, and resembled in the distance a string of ants crawling toward an ant hill. Again our caravan moved forward, and, after traversing the narrow table land, ascended the upper part of the fearfully steep and rugged mountain slope, studded with huge boulders, until we reached the summit; where we found a tribe of nomadic Kûrds encamped in spacious, comfortable tents of brown or black woolen fabric, pitched a few miles above the wretched little village called Kārābāgtshē.

Signor P. having decided to make a forced march the next day, in order to reach Suverek before nightfall, concluded to proceed no farther that day, but to pass the night in the midst of the Kûrdian camp, though he had been warned by various parties in Diarbekir of the notorious lawlessness of the nomadic Kûrds. He, however, thought it best to disarm the rascals by pitching his tent right in their midst, and by claiming their hospitality, the sacredness of which even a Kûrd rarely violates.

In pursuance of this resolution, we swerved abruptly from the road, and made straight for the large tent pitched in the centre of the camp, which we well knew to be the residence of the shiekh of the tribe. Our unceremonious introduction created quite a commotion among the ruffianly looking mountaineers, the male por-

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tion of which we surprised at their usual pastime of squatting in all attitudes on the open space of ground in front of the shiekh's tent, some talking, or smoking, others sleeping or playing cards or backgammon, while some were chasing the youngsters and young curs around the camp. Of the women, the greater number were inside the tents attending to household affairs. Some were sitting on the ground engaged in grinding corn; others were grooming the horses of their lazy lords and masters picketed in front of the tents. Signor P. forthwith singled out an old gray-bearded, wrinkled-faced little man sitting on a pillow or bolster, and surrounded by a few of the better clad Kûrds, as the chief among them, rode up to him, salāamed, and made known his wishes. A moment after the shiekh arose, issued a few orders, and in a short time the ground in front of his tent was cleared. Our mukāries advanced with our beasts of burden, which carried our camping materials; stakes were driven in the ground; ropes stretched; horses made fast, etc.

Half an hour afterwards we found ourselves snugly encamped amidst a tribe of about four hundred Kûrds. The shiekh, during the time we were engaged in pitching our camp, had caused the women of his household to remove all incumbrances in his tent to one side of it, and then partitioned it into two compartments by means of a large piece of tent cloth. He then occupied one-half of the tent with his family, and offered the other half for our accommodation, which we thankfully accepted. After awhile our host sent us a substantial meal composed of roast lamb, boiled goat's flesh, rice, "laban" (curd or newly made white cheese), bowls of sour milk, and cakes of coarse bread. Before we sat down to it, he appeared, and as if it were understood, walked up to the dishes, tasted of each of them,

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and silently withdrew. Anybody not versed in Oriental manners would call this a rather cool proceeding, to say the least; but as I have stated, it is customary with many nations in the Orient, and practiced to show that the food has not been tampered with or poisoned. Highly pleased with the unexpected hospitality of the Koordian chief, we should have been glad to treat him to a bumper of wine or even arrack, if we had ventured to make him the offer; but his whole tribe, like nearly all other nomadic Kûrds, being, at least nominally, Moslems, consequently forbidden to taste wine or intoxicating liquors, it would not do; yet I doubt whether he would have felt insulted, as he and his crowd did not seem to be very strict Moslems. We treated him and the chief men of the tribe with coffee and tobacco "ad libitum," and they became quite communicative. Even the women, some of whom were quite good looking, were, contrary to the usual habit of the Orientals, evidently interested in the Feringhies, and surprised us with their volubility. By nightfall plenty of bedding was spread for us in the tent by the shiekh's wives; we rather shrank from using it, anticipating a sleepless night from the invasion of phlebotomistic insects; but rather than insult our host, we mustered pluck enough to go through the ordeal of passing a night on it. To our agreeable surprise we slept as soundly as an infant in its mother's arms. A solitary star was still glimmering in the dark blue firmament, when the four watchmen on guard, by the orders of Signor P., went among the sleeping grooms and mukāries of the caravan to rouse them from their slumbers. On the embers of the dying camp fire, Yoossooff, our caterer and his assistant, hurriedly made the everlasting coffee, while every one else was occupied getting ready to start. Pleased and surprised that not a single article belong-

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ing to our caravan had been appropriated by the usually unscrupulous mountaineers, we distributed a few presents among the women of the shiekh's household, who, with many other members of the tribe, had risen to see us off, as by the rays of the rising sun, we moved onward. A dense fog covered the plain below us, the air was quite bracing and the heavy dew-drops glittered like diamonds in the morning sunlight.

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XXVI.

ACROSS THE MOUNTAIN.

The Discovery—An Investigation—Vineyards of Suverek—Oriental Wine—In Camp for the Night—Decline of the Town—The Arrogant Turk—On the Road to Bireh-Iek—Our New Guide—Ordek—A Beautiful Picture—Seeking Quarters—A Short Rest—The Natives—Importance of the City's Location—The Ferry.

In due time, we passed the little village of Karabagtshe, the inhabitants of which eagerly gazed upon us. Some ten or twelve miles further on, we met with a stony, lonely ravine, or gully, watered by a rivulet, a tributary of the river Sham Shatt, which latter, in its turn, is a tributary of the mighty river Euphrates. On the point of crossing this rivulet, I, who usually rode in advance of the caravan in the early morning for the purpose of shooting game, was startled by the sight of a dead man lying face downwards in about six inches of water some thirty yards below the crossing. This unpleasant discovery induced me to stay where I was until the caravan, which was not more than two hundred yards behind, could come up. I did not need to report my discovery; for, almost as soon as they came in sight of the water, I saw several arms pointing in the direction of the corpse, and heard their exclamations of surprise. Signor P. cantered up to me, deathly pale, and enquired hastily what was the matter, apparently afraid that I had killed the poor fellow. Upon giving him an explanation, he felt easier; but requested me to follow him. He rode straight up to the corpse, as far as his horse would quietly carry him; but the noble animal suddenly stopped, pricked

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up his ears, stretched his arched neck, planted both forefeet firmly on the ground and, snorting furiously, vehemently protested against any further advance. My own horse was bolder, but could not be induced, even by spurs, to approach within five yards of the body; and that distance was quite close enough for anybody with sensitive nostrils, for the corpse emitted a sickening effluvia clearly demonstrating my innocence. Signor P., the worthy, kind-hearted old soul, could not for his life have left that dismal spot without burying that corpse, whether it was Christian, Jew, or Heathen, so long as it was that of a human being. We had accomplished about half a day's journey, and needed two or three hours' rest; the more so, as we had been told that there was no water, beyond this rivulet, within ten miles. Signor P., therefore, ordered a halt. After the animals were cared for, he hired some of the men of our caravan to bury the dead. Deposited in an humble, lonely grave, Father M. gave his benediction, after which the corpse was gently covered with earth; and, to prevent the grave from being disturbed by beasts of prey, three large flat stones were placed upon it. Poor man! will his bereaved wife and children ever know of his lonely death and grave? The incident cast a gloom over most of the caravan.

Eager to get away from such a sad locality, we immediately resumed our march. About five miles further on, in a similarly secluded spot equally favorable for ambuscades and murders, we saw a little stone structure, the size of a moderately large coffin. It was formed of rough stone slabs, and was within a few feet of the road-side. We did not doubt that this little rudely constructed way-mark was the scene of another road-side horror. Curiosity caused me to investigate its contents. To do this, I had of course to dismount,

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and lie on my face, as the whole structure was not over sixteen inches high, and its largest aperture a fissure scarcely six inches from the ground. Peeping in, I espied, sure enough, a complete, well-bleached human skeleton lying flat on its back. Further on, we passed several others of these wayside tombs; but I left them unexplored. Our conversation, from the time we left the grave near the rivulet, naturally bore on the mournful incident, and there was no end of the surmises about the manner in which the unfortunate man lost his life; but what puzzled us most was, that his body, so long unburied, had not been torn to pieces by the wild animals abounding in that district. That it had been left to decay, uninterred, did not surprise us, for we were aware of Oriental indifference to the fate of their fellow beings. None but a well-armed caravan, or a number of fearless, well-armed travellers, would have dared to linger as long as we did in that notoriously unsafe portion of the road, where there is not a human dwelling, or a place of shelter, within ten miles in any direction; and where even the Turkish courier was frequently waylaid and his mail-bags ransacked by highwaymen, in spite of his escort of four to eight well-armed zaptiēhs.

After a dull march of ten miles more, over comparatively easy ground, partly through a lonely valley, partly across a sort of undulating, sterile plain, which extends from the foot of the Karadsha-Dāgh westward to the banks of the Euphrates, we crossed another rivulet, from which the road began to ascend and to assume gradually a very rocky, narrow and impracticable character. Finally we reached the extensive vineyards of Suverek, situated in the northeastern and southeastern suburbs of the town just named.

The road led right through the midst of them; but

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as each vineyard adjacent to the road was protected by a high, rough stone wall, their grapes were pretty well out of the reach of wayfarers.

These vineyards yield an abundance of delicious grapes, which would furnish one of the most delightful wines of the Orient, if the population of Suverek understood how to press them, and the treatment of the juice so extracted; for, up to this time, they press the grapes with their hands and feet—not scrupulously clean—then let the juice stand, in large earthen urns or jars, until required for use, thus allowing the most essential quality of wine—the aroma—to escape. However, in spite of all this carelessness, most of the Oriental wines retain qualities enough to render them the most delicious and intoxicating of beverages; a fact to which the first historical tippler, "Father Noah," might have testified.

While passing through the vineyards of Suverek, we noticed with much regret that the well-known disease "rust" was creating great havoc among the vines, and if there be no cure for this destructive vegetable epidemic, the vineyards of Suverek will soon have to be counted among the things that were.

On emerging from the vineyards, we found ourselves on the threshold of Suverek; and, amidst the usual demonstrations of surprise and curiosity on the part of the population, we marched into the town to the only khan it contained. Large enough, however, to receive our caravan, we were soon installed as comfortably as the wretched accommodations would permit. The khan contained a spacious quadrangular courtyard paved with large round cobble-stones. An old, rickety, screaching draw-well, half full of stagnant water, occupied the centre of the yard. Along one of the inner sides of the khan was a long, lofty, wooden

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roof supported by a few worm-eaten poles. The roof itself was very old, perforated everywhere, and so tottering that it threatened to come down upon us every moment. Yet it was the only place where a human being might look for shelter in this caravansary from rain, sunshine, or dew. The gate of the khan was effectually closed by a pair of ponderous wooden doors, both of them so dilapidated by the dry rot, that the heaviest members of the "Fat men's association" might have crawled through without touching the doors. Notwithstanding these paltry defects, an American real estate expert would probably have called this "valuable building property," as it was located in the centre of the town. Its right hand neighbor, a Hebrew money-changer, who sat in his little stall smiling, clinching his greasy wooden cash-box between his knees, waiting for somebody from "down east" (Diarbekir) to arrive and ask him please to receive sterling silver "kerans" (a Persian coin, worth in the Ottoman empire five Turkish piasters, but not generally current west of Diarbekir) for greasy, silver-plated copper, "beshlicks" (five piaster piece of the Ottoman empire), charging the trifle of five per cent. exchange or commission for the favor.

On the left hand side of the khan, we noticed an establishment kept by a portly Turk, and probably intended to represent a butcher's stall; but the headless carcases of several nondescript animals, pretending to be those of sheep and goats, looked suspiciously like flayed curs and infantile donkeys. Just opposite the khan was a blacksmith's shop, the sanctum sanctorum of an overgrown, fearfully lank Koord, with sooty face, staring eyes, desperately crooked nose, and satanic smile, the image of Lucifer with his caudal appendage snugly stowed away in a pair of voluminous pajāmas.

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This sable necromancer manages in some way to affix old shoes, with old nails, to the hoofs of new customers' horses, mules, and asses, charging their weight in Turkish piasters for the job; but he never had to put them on a second time for the same owner of the same animal.

We found Suverek a town of about five thousand inhabitants, mostly Turks, with a thin sprinkling of Jews, Armenians, and Christians. It is built on the gently rising slope of a long range of parched, gravelly hills studded here and there with a solitary tree or a cluster of bushes. The town is not now enclosed by walls or fortifications; but there are ample and unmistakable evidences that it was formerly so. The streets of the town are very narrow, uneven, unpaved, and of course suffocatingly dusty in dry weather, and shockingly muddy after a few days' rain. Like all Oriental towns, Suverek is built very irregularly; the majority of its buildings are flat-roofed; the poorer ones are of clay mixed with straw and dry grass and the better class of roughly hewn stone. A great many of the buildings are in ruins, and the town bears evidence of having once contained a much larger population. The cause of this decline I do not know, but presume it to be due to war and pestilence in former periods. Suverek also rejoices in a little bazaar, but its trade is not important; and, if it were not located on the high road between Aleppo and Diarbekir, it would hardly ever be visited by strangers.

Chief in authority at this place is the Kaïmakam, an arrogant old Turk, a petty tyrant, privileged extortioner, and thief of the first water, who resides in a khan resembling in outward appearance a country jail, and occupied by his worthy self, his pretty harem and a crowd of the most ruffianly looking sub-officials and hangers-on imaginable, most of them "armed to the

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teeth," and as insolent and overbearing as cowardly villains can possibly be.

The Moslem inhabitants of Suverek stand in rather bad repute with the Christians and Jews of that section of the world for religious fanatacism, quarrelsomeness and lawlessness, and they are the most slovenly and treacherous looking people to be found in Upper Mesopotamia. It is needless to add that we were anxious to quit the place as soon as practicable; even our horses seemed anxious to get away.

An easy march of ten miles in a southwesterly direction, over tolerable ground, took us to a little tributary of the river Euphrates, which we crossed, and continued our journey leisurely for fifteen miles to the river Sham Shatt. After traveling twenty-five miles without meeting a human being we concluded, although it was scarcely two o'clock in the afternoon, to go no further that day, but to encamp until sunrise next morning near that village, and in the meantime get a suitable man to pilot us by another route less difficult than the usual one, *via.* Orfa to Birēh-jik, our next place of destination.

There was no difficulty in finding for good pay a serviceable guide. Indeed there were so many of them eager to officiate in the capacity required, that each offered to do it cheaper than the other. We finally secured one who was ready, not only to serve us as a guide, but to do almost anything for a mere trifle. This individual led us, early on the next day, for a short distance along the usual route; but on coming to a side path on our right, he suddenly turned off into the latter, and conducted us across an almost perfectly level plain toward a little village called Ordek, built on the delta formed by the two sources of a small tributary of the river Euphrates.

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Arriving there about noon, we gave our men and horses two hours' rest, and then resumed march, striking due west towards another village on the right bank of another of the innumerable tributaries of the Upper Euphrates. This village, called "Jallach" by its inhabitants, although not containing a building large enough to accommodate twenty men (to say nothing of horses), was so snugly located that we made it our headquarters until daybreak the following morning, and having been told by the villagers that we should meet neither human dwellings nor water between that place and Birēh-jik, a distance of nearly thirty miles, we provided a good supply of water in tooloochs, a precaution that had not been necessary for several weeks past. Determined to reach Birēh-jik the next day at all hazards, we were at sunrise a long distance from our last night's resting place, gallantly striding across the arid plain. During the course of the first ten miles, we crossed a bed of a periodical river, likewise a tributary of the Euphrates; but it was as dry as a bone at that time, and had evidently been so for months. Not a tree, nor a shady place of any description was met with, and by eleven o'clock in the forenoon we were compelled to stop for an hour and a half in the burning sun to rest, and distribute water and provisions among men and horses.

About three o'clock in the afternoon we suddenly stood upon the high cliffs which tower over the left bank of the Euphrates in that section. As if a curtain was suddenly withdrawn from before us, we stood entranced by the glorious view we beheld; even the phlegmatic Arabs exclaimed, "y-Allah" ("Oh, God"); and well might they do so, for fully one thousand feet below us glided the majestic river Euphrates; its broad sheet of water of the purest azure hue, and as smooth as a

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mirror, flowing silently through the wide cliff-bound valley, after emerging like a stream of fluid silver from behind the high barren mountain (which projects boldly into the valley ten miles further up the river), and after describing an endless variety of graceful curves along the valley, lost itself to our views, in the yellowish gray arid plains of El Jesîreh (Mesopotamia) far away in the dim haze of the southern horizon. The valley itself is bordered on the right side by undulating barren hills apparently uninhabited. On the left, by almost perpendicular rocks of prodigious height, intersected and deeply furrowed here and there by yawning chasms and wild gorges, clinging to the precipitous sides of which grow stunted trees and tufts of coarse grass, which are utterly inaccessible to man or beast, and, therefore, safe perches for the numerous eagles, hawks, and vultures, which incessantly chase each other with shrill, piercing cries along the crests of the towering cliffs, or gyrate silently in mid-air high above the watery mirror. Far below our feet we beheld a broad, deep, mountain gorge thickly sown with mammoth rocks and huge boulders, interspersed with irregular spots of green sward and little gardens; the latter literally overgrown with vegetables, grapes and creeping vines, flowers, fragrant bushes, and luxurant fruit and shade trees, wherever there was soil enough for them to take root, and immediately below the gardens, the quaint old town of Birēh-jik, rising like an ampitheatre (but in shape like a pyramid), with the water's edge at its base, and gradually ascending far up the gorge, bristles with lofty, slender minarets, spacious mosques, towers and castles, scattered among two thousand minor buildings of a dazzling white hue, which with the bright zinc and glazed tiled cupolas of the minarets and mosques is blinding to the eye, especially when the rays of

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the sun fall upon these gleaming roofs, at which time the image of the entire city, with all its grand surrounding scenery, is accurately reflected in the deep blue water.

Reluctantly leaving this ravishing picture, we slowly and cautiously descended the tortuous and precipitous defile. We passed a series of natural grottoes and artificial caverns on the way, and finally reached the narrow lanes at the upper end of the town, which were bordered on both sides by high garden walls overgrown by luxuriant grapevines, while fig, orange, lemon, pomegranate, and a variety of other semi-tropical fruit-trees, groaning under the weight of delicious fruit, overshadowed the little gardens.

A few minutes' progress down a terribly steep and rudely paved street, and we found ourselves right in the heart of the romantic city, gaped at and ogled by everybody, from the skulking street cur and the tattered street beggar to the gazelle-eyed inmates of the harem, whose fair, oval faces, and delicate, white, bejewelled hands, we could distinctly discern through the interstices of the wooden lattice work, which, throughout the Orient, screens the windows of the apartments of these fair captives. After marching down nearly to the river's edge, through the centre of the town, we ascertained that there was not a level spot in the entire place large enough to accommodate the caravan. Completely at a loss where to look for a suitable locality anywhere on this steep, rocky, mountain slope, we were on the point of crossing the river for the purpose of camping on the other side where the ground was more level, when a Turkish official, evidently suspecting the cause of our perplexity, spoke to Signor P. with a grace and politeness unusual with the majority of Turkish government officials, informed him in broken Italian that in consequence of the unfavorable nature

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of the ground in the town, it was customary for larger caravans to take up their quarters in one of the large caves which he said we must have noticed in the perpendicular rocks towering just above the city, and located on the left hand side of the path by which we had descended the side of the mountain. Being assured that we should there find comfortable quarters large enough for double our number, we turned about, which, by the way, was no easy matter in the very narrow, steep, and slippery-paved streets of the lower city, re-ascended the mountain slope until we reached the caves, which, on closer inspection, really proved to be the most convenient quarters a caravan can possibly fall in with anywhere in Mesopotamia, or indeed throughout the Orient. There are several of these large, artificial caverns or subterranean khans in that locality. The one which we selected was hewn horizontally out of the solid mass of perpendicular rock of gray sandstone, which rises to a height of about one hundred feet some twenty paces to the left of the mountain road. The cave was a perfectly level, plain apartment about sixty feet deep, forty feet in width and of a uniform height of eight or nine feet. Although cut in the solid rock, its ceiling was supported by two rows of round pillars, about three feet in diameter, likewise cut out of the solid rock. The sides, floor, and ceiling of the cave are tolerably smooth, and perfectly free from dampness; the entrance is on a level with the ground outside, and of the height and nearly the width of the cave itself, thus admitting plenty of fresh air and light. It would be difficult to state with accuracy the age of these caves, or their original purpose; the one we occupied, however, must be several centuries old, and appears to have been intended for the purpose for which it is now used; viz.: that of a

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subterranean khan or caravansary, for it contained a number of mangers hewn into the solid rock, and iron bolts with rings for securing the horses. All of these were very much worn and evidently of great age.

The originator of these subterranean khans, whoever he may be, is certainly entitled to the praise and thanks of every traveler in the Orient; for safer and better quarters cannot possibly be found in that region, because they are not only water, fire, and shot proof, but in every way inaccessible to thieves and other intruders, except by the regular entrance, which can be easily guarded and defended. Besides, they are delightfully cool in summer and quite warm during the winter, or rather during the cold season. Upon entering this khan we found it unoccupied; but it had evidently not been long so, for there were here and there the smoking remains of camp fires. The place was tolerably clean, and we were soon snugly ensconced. The day had been suffocatingly sultry, and we sincerely longed, sheltered though we were, for a brisk shower of rain to cool the atmosphere and lay the dust.

By the time we were properly installed in our subterranean quarters, it was too late to think of going to the bazaar to procure the necessary provisions for our journey to Aleppo, a distance of more than fifty miles. It was therefore doubtful if we should start before noon of the next day. At nightfall two sentinels were stationed at the entrance of the cave, and a camp-fire lighted. The night passed away quietly, although we were twice awakened by the loud challenge of the watchmen. As soon as the sun rose, Signor P. and myself started with some of our men and packhorses for the bazaar to make the requisite purchases. This accomplished, our men returned to the cave with the provisions, and with orders to get everything ready

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for the start. We took a short stroll through the city, and then proceeded to the river in order to arrange with the officials in charge of the ferry for the transport of our caravan across the Euphrates. On our return to the cave we found that our companion, Father M., and the negro girl Bahri, were both indisposed and weak, in consequence of a slight attack of chills and fever, due probably to the very cool atmosphere in the cave. The leader of our caravan, always more considerate for his traveling companions than for himself, therefore humanely postponed our departure till the following day. This unexpected turn of affairs gave me time to learn considerably more of Birēh-jik. "Bir" (as the place is plainly called by the Arabs, "bir" means in Arabic "well," "cistern"), but generally known by its Turkish name, "Birēh-jik," the ancient "Birtha," is a town of from eight to ten thousand inhabitants, artificially fortified, wherever otherwise accessible, by rather low but thick stone walls, surmounted by battlements and loop-holed towers; fortifications which centuries ago undoubtedly have made the place (all but inaccessible by nature) a very powerful stronghold.

In this enlightened age of mammoth siege guns, however, these defences would be worse than useless, for a few well-directed shots from a large calibre Parrot, Armstrong, or Krupp siege gun, planted on the opposite bank of the river, would destroy the town; nor would castle and citadel, the latter being already partly in ruins, and built on eminences to the right and left of the town, and commanding the valley and river, stand any better chance in such a case. Against unruly Koord and Arab tribes they may, however, still prove effective for some time yet in case of emergency. The garrison of the place consists of a few

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hundred badly drilled and worse equipped soldiers, and the few guns of the fortress are old fashioned, worthless and evidently more intended to overawe the ignorant natives than to do active service. The military throughout the Ottoman Empire is in general, but especially in the garrison towns of Mesopotamia, rather unwilling to allow strangers to inspect the tottering fortresses and useless guns; but whether from shame or suspicion of espionage, I am really unable to say, though I truly believe the latter feeling predominates with them. Birēh-jik is a thoroughly Turkish city, far more so than even Suverek, Diarbekir or Mossul, and the vernacular of the place is Turkish, the Arab language being no more spoken there than the French language in England or the Northern States of the Union, and the few Arabic speaking inhabitants are only temporary residents. There are a small number of Jews, Armenians and Roman Catholics to be found in Birēh-jik; but not, to my knowledge, a single European resident except a couple of Albanians and Greeks, who were probably born in the Ottoman Empire, and may in that case be called Asiatics. The mosques, minarets and the better class of private buildings are constructed with great solidity, and of a hard, yellowish white limestone. The necessity of their being well-built is apparent, considering the nature of the ground upon which they are erected. The dwellings of the poorer classes, however, are miserable hovels, rather clinging to than being built upon the very steep mountain slope. The thoroughfares, as already alluded to, are very narrow, tortuous and filthy, like all those in the Ottoman Empire; but their greatest nuisance lies in their wretched pavements, which afford unusual facilities to break one's neck. The town sports a small bazaar, but it is hardly worthy of notice when com-

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pared with those of Diarbekir, Mossul or Bagdad. There is not much business done in Birēh-jik, and the place owes its importance (commercially) entirely to its being situated right on the great caravan route between the Mediterranean Sea and Mesopotamia, and on the frontier between Mesopotamia and Syria, the river Euphrates forming the boundary line between the two countries. Its chief importance, however, unquestionably lies in the fact that it commands the principal crossing of the Upper Euphrates, the travelers and caravans going from Syria to Mesopotamia, or *vice versa*, being almost compelled to cross the Euphrates at Birēh-jik; and it is from this ferry service that the majority of the inhabitants of this town derive their sustenance.

The boat, or rather boats (for although but one is used at a time, there are several others on hand in case of accident), are very clumsy, uncouth looking wooden crafts of about sixty tons' carrying capacity, and resemble in size and shape the small class Arab "baglows" or sailing vessels which ply on the river Tigris between Bagdad and Bassora. Indeed, but for the mast and sails, of which the ferry boats of Birēh-jik are destitute, the latter could hardly be distinguished from the ordinary Arab baglows. The boats are wretchedly arranged as regards comfort, the floors being destitute of even a rough floor of planks for passengers and animals to stand upon, but exhibiting the bare frame work of their hulls, upon which man and beast have to secure a footing the best way they can. On both sides of the stream, which at Birēh-jik has a width of about two hundred and fifty yards, and a maximum depth of fifteen feet during the dry season, there is a sort of wooden platform projecting a few feet into the water, at which the ferry boat lies for the purpose of discharging her cargo, as she cannot come closer in

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shore, although she does not draw over five feet of water when loaded.

The crew of the ferry boat, when in active service, is composed of a captain and six or eight men. The onerous duty of the former seems to consist in doing nothing but sitting cross-legged *a la Turc* on the poop, smoking a chibook (long stemmed pipe); that of the latter, however, imposes rather hard work, as the poor fellows have to push, by means of long wooden poles, the cumbrous craft, by sheer muscular power, from one side of the stream to the other, while one of them works the large, uncouth rudder of the boat.

During and immediately after the wet season, when the stream rises to nearly double its usual size, and overflows the low lands of El Jesīrēh as regularly as the Nile does those of Egypt, the crew cannot always touch bottom with their poles, and then, I am told, they use oars instead as a motive power. The current of the Euphrates, as I have already stated, is very slow, or they would never be able to stem the tide with their clumsy boat. This ferry boat, owing to her shape and interior arrangement, is not capable of carrying more than eight or ten loaded camels, or more than twenty horses, at a time, which will give the reader an idea how long it takes to ferry one of the ordinary caravans across, which number from one hundred to five hundred camels, especially when there are many animals among them which refuse to embark at all; a frequent occurrence, by the way. Towards nightfall of the second day of our sojourn at Birēh-jik, our two invalids had so far recovered that it was decided to resume our journey by sunrise the next morning, the ferry boat running only between sunrise and sunset; and everthing was put in readiness that evening for our prompt departure in the morning.

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XXVII.

THROUGH THE VALLEY.

The "Captain"—Historical Battlefields—Unique Sheep Shearing—A Night's Rest—Forward Again—Meeting a Strange Cavalcade—The Arab's Diversion—Tattoos—Occupation of the Female Natives.

After another night's pleasant rest in the deep recesses of the spacious cavern, our caravan proceeded, hale and hearty to the ferry, shortly before sunrise. In evident expectation of a liberal "bakshish" (present, gratuity), from the "Feringhee" (European) travellers, the otherwise imperturbably phlegmatic captain of the antique ferry-boat had roused his tattered crew a little earlier than usual out of their slumbers, for although Phœbus had not yet shed his rays into the deep valley of the Euphrates, captain, crew and boat were all ready for our embarkation, so that much to our satisfaction, one horse after the other, almost as fast as they could be brought to the river's edge, could be stowed away on board, and under the careful superintendence of the head of our caravan; all but one of our valuable stallions were safely got on board, and nearly filled all the available space on the craft. The one left behind with the beasts of burden, although the finest horse in our caravan, was left purposely, on account of his very vicious disposition, and as he might otherwise have done a great deal of damage with his feet and teeth among his mates in the narrow boat, he was judiciously condemned by Signor P. to take passage with the rear-guard, *i. e.*, with the beasts of burden composed chiefly of mules, to fight which, this equine bruiser, we

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hoped, would regard beneath his dignity. The boat being full, started with us to the opposite river bank, at such an amazing rate of speed, that it took us just half an hour to get there, where already a heterogeneous crowd of Syrian peasantry, some on foot, others on donkeys, mules, horses, and camels, bound to town with loads of vegetables, poultry, sheep, goats, firewood, etc., were impatiently awaiting ferriage across the stream.

Signor P. left me in charge of the horses, while he returned with the boat to convey the balance of our caravan over, which was effected in an hour or more, without further accident than a few bruises received by the poor heavily laden beasts of burden from the hoofs of our vicious stallions. The captain of the boat duly received his "bakshish" with a deep reverential salaam, and immediately after resumed his phlegmatic smoke, puffing his fragrant tobacco fumes from his perch on the poop of the "ark" which returned to Biréh-jik, while we struck briskly across the valley of the Euphrates, towards the lonely hills in front of us.

An hour's brisk march brought us up to the top of the range of hills, whence we followed the road for some time, across a sort of table-land, various parts of which exhibited signs of cultivation; but the country all around, as far as we could see, was totally destitute of trees, as well as of human dwellings, except some distance off the road on our left, where, built on the northern slope of a low hill, we espied the wretched little village of Nisib, composed of about fifty roughly built, dilapidated stone houses, of one story, with flat roofs apparently all built to the right and left of a single street, and surrounded by ruins. This humble little village, seeming to be hardly worth noticing by casual passers-by, is nevertheless a place of decided historical

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interest, and an object of considerable wrangling between historians, because it contests with Nisibin the honor of occupying the site of Nisibis.

However that may be, it is certain that the little village of Nisib has been a historical spot, during the last thirty-four years, owing to its being in the immediate vicinity of the battle field (the table-land just described) where on June 24th, 1839, Ibrahim Pasha, commander-in-chief of the army of the famous Mehemet, or Mohammed Ali, viceroy of Egypt (and adopted son of that warlike prince), with an army of but ten thousand Egyptians, utterly routed, and almost annihilated that of Sultan Mahmud, which was at least forty thousand strong. Signor P., at that time in the prime of life, was a cavalry officer in the service of Mehemet Ali; and was not only an eye witness of the battle of Nisib, but took an active part in it. I listened with great interest to the minute details of that startling historic event, as related to me by Signor P., an event which, but for the interference of the European powers, would have induced the ambitious and victorious Mehemet Ali to annex all of the Turkish dominions in Asia, to Egypt, as he had already done with the island of Candia in 1830, and the whole of Syria in 1833. The features of my venerable companion were absolutely radiant with enthusiasm as he vividly described and pointed out to me the respective positions of the two armies on the table-land over which we were then travelling; the intrenchments; the attack; the thunder of artillery; the terrible carnage; the wavering, retreat, and the final stampede of the entire Turkish force, in dire confusion towards Bireh-jik, hotly pursued by the fleet Egyptian cavalry to the very banks of the Euphrates, and within range of the guns of the fortress; driving thousands upon thousands of the

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Turkish soldiers into the broad stream, where they perished like rats as they attempted to swim across.

About an hour afterwards we arrived at a small village consisting of about thirty very low, flat roofed stone dwellings, where we took two hours' rest. It is called Tell Basher, and is located on the southeastern slope of the table-land of Nisib, which we had just travelled. The entire portion of the population seemed to be engaged in shearing sheep, a large number of these meek animals having been collected in and around the village for the purpose of having their fleeces clipped off; an operation performed, in spite of the inferior shape and quality of the shears used for the purpose with astonishing dexterity, especially by the females, who appeared to be adepts at this work; but what surprised us still more was the unusual readiness with which the flock submitted to the operation; very few of the sheep requiring to be held down by force, or to have their legs tied. Indeed many of the veterans of the herd, evidently quite familiar with the performance, and sure of gentle treatment, laid down almost of their accord, at the feet of the operator, to submit to the clipping. A good many of the finest ewes, and especially those with lambs, wore a fetich, or charm, in the shape of a triangular bag filled with certain roots, herbs and other matter, and dangling like a bell, from a cord, or leather strap tied around the neck of the animal. These fetiches are in general use throughout the Orient, but particularly so among the painfully superstitious natives of Syria, Mesopotamia and Arabia, who staunchly believe that they are an effective protection against witchcraft, evil spirits, accidents, disease; in fact, against every misfortune; therefore they are worn by most of the natives of both sexes, and all ages, and also by camels, horses, cattle, sheep and goats, especially by

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the females of the human and the animal families. Indeed, there are few Bedouin Arabs who will ever allow their favorite wife, child, or animal to be without a fetich.

During the course of the afternoon we again started on our journey, in a southerly direction, along the base of a long range of rugged hills to the banks of the Sandshur river, a tributary of the Euphrates. We got there just at sunset. Immediately after crossing the river, the road led us up a rather steep hill until we could hear the distant barking of numerous large dogs ahead of us, a sure sign that some village or camp was not far off, though yet invisible. The further we advanced, however, the louder and more furious became the barking, and we soon heard human voices, the faint outlines of buildings became discernible, and we finally found ourselves in Tshanguly, a poor, dilapidated looking village inhabited by about twenty families. Here we determined to rest for the night, having made a good day's journey, and tasted scarcely any food since leaving Birēh-jik.

A house, a trifle more decent looking and slightly larger than the rest, which were really not much better than the worst human dwellings we had hitherto met on our journey, was selected for our headquarters, its inmates consenting as usual to vacate their premises for the night in consideration of appropriate compensation in the shape of ten piasters (about fifty cents American coin), which was, in my opinion, about ten piasters too much; as the little courtyard was of no use to us, it being much too small to accommodate our caravan, and as for the little house itself, we soon found to our dismay that it was alive with vermin of every description, so that Father M., Signor P. and myself passed the night in perpetual motion. No one who

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has not been similarly situated is competent to form an approximate idea of the pleasure with which we saw the daylight appear, and I doubt if poor Yoossooff, the cook, was ever shaken so unceremoniously out of a happy slumber to the performance of his daily duties. He was wonderfully gifted with sleeping powers, however, and snored furiously all night, notwithstanding the legions of crawling, jumping, and flying vermin devouring him.

The morning was rendered dismal by a dense fog which hung over the horrid place, and kept the smoke of our fuel hanging heavily about us. These cakes of fuel, "artistically" prepared by the females of the country from camel and horse manure mixed with chopped straw, or other vegetable matter, and baked quite hard in the sun, are in general use not only in the desolate, arid and barren districts of Arabia, Mesopotamia and Syria, but throughout Asia and Africa, wherever wood is scarce or altogether absent. The manufacture of these fuel cakes forms a considerable branch of the industry of the poorer classes of those countries, the more so as peat and coal has not as yet been discovered in these regions.

Our eagerness to leave our wretched night quarters with all possible haste caused us to take a very frugal breakfast in a dangerously short time—dangerous to our stomachs at least—and to resume our march immediately afterwards across a wide, perfectly level, and apparently fertile plain, though utterly destitute of trees, or even bushes, and withal very scantily populated. The further we advanced on this plain, the more the misty vapor that hung over the country dispersed, and an hour after sunrise the sky was as blue and the atmosphere as transparent as they are ever seen in Syria. Scattered over the vast plain, we espied several small

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villages, and in their vicinity herds of camels, horses, donkeys, cattle, sheep and goats; but on the road we did not meet a human being for over fifteen miles, which brought us nearly to the suburbs of Ak Dejarin, a village equally distant from our previous night's quarters and Aleppo. Within two miles of this place, we overtook and passed a number of villagers, male and female, young and old, who, sitting on miserably small and ugly donkeys, and equipped with hoes, spades, sickles and other agricultural implements, were evidently returning from the fields to their homes, being compelled to suspend their labor during the intensely hot hours of noon. We could not help laughing at the extremely ludicrous appearance of this strange cavalcade, as it slid along, enveloped in a cloud of dust stirred up the nimble little hoofs of the dwarfish donkeys, most of which animals were so inferior in size that their riders had to keep their knees constantly bent to prevent their feet from dragging on the ground. Indeed, when they wished to dismount, all they had to do was to straighten their lower limbs so that their feet would rest on the ground, when the donkeys could slip from under the riders and leave the latter standing on the ground. No one, who has ever witnessed the performance of the donkeys of the Orient, can help admiring their truly wonderful strength and endurance, for it is an every day thing in Egypt, Arabia, Syria, and Mesopotamia to see them carrying loads greatly exceeding their bodily weight from twenty to thirty miles every day. These donkeys are a peculiar species of the asinine race of a dwarf breed, gray and black, not over two hundred pounds in weight (some of them scarcely one hundred pounds), and correspond with the Shetland and Pegu ponies of the equine race.

While out hunting one day in the desert with a

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friend, we fell in with a big, heavy Arab sitting on an unusually small donkey, which he thrashed unmercifully with a stick, and yelled like a demon to urge the staggering little animal along. Noticing two good sized bags dangling by the side of the little animal, we rode up to the Arab, and in a friendly tone asked him what the bags contained. Being answered gruffly, "salt," a heavy weight by itself, we determined to punish the cruel wretch, and ordered him to dismount forthwith, and change places with the donkey, *i. e.*, carry the donkey and the bag of salt for a mile or so. He evidently considered such an insinuation rather cool, and beneath his dignity to heed, and attempted to move on, whereupon we covered him with our rifles and threatened to perforate him if he continued, unless he heeded our command. He dismounted and, muttering angrily, marched by the side of the donkey, but was still unwilling to shoulder the burthen. No sooner, however, did he hear the "click" of our firearms, than he began to tremble, knowing well that resistance would be useless, he being armed with a stick and knife only; so with a grunt expressive of his disgust, knelt down in the sand, and pushing his head through the opening between the fore and hind legs of the animal, shouldered it bodily just as a shepherd would a sheep which was unable to walk, and without any visible effort on his part rose to his feet. Thus loaded, we ordered him to move on, and following in his wake, made him carry his little ass and the two bags of salt for nearly a mile. We then permitted him to unload, but before we left told him that if he attempted to mount the donkey, or ill treat him, within our sight, we would follow him, and make him retake the place of the poor brute. The fellow evidently saw that we were in earnest, for as far as we could see him on the level

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desert, he was quietly tramping on behind his ass; but looking back over his shoulder from time to time to see whether we were still watching him, and no doubt invoking the wrath of Allah, and Mohammed, the prophet, on the heads of the two infamous "Kafirs," (infidels, non-Moslems,) who dared to interfere in his affairs and heap insult on him a devoted Hajji, a honorary title among the Moslems, and meaning a Moslem who has made a pilgrimage to Mecca. The majority of the members of the rustic cavalcade, which we passed in the neighborhood of Ak Dejarin, were females, they being there, as everywhere in the Orient, indeed, wherever civilization has not yet taken root, the tillers of the soil. All of them were dressed in the usual dark blue colored homespun cloth of the Syrian and Mesopotamian peasant women, and seemed to be remarkably hilarious and light hearted after so many hours of toil; for although it was not yet noon when we passed them, they had probably already done what is called a full day's work, it being customary among that peasantry to turn out to their field labor as early as one o'clock in the morning during sultry weather, and to work till about ten o'clock in the forenoon, by which time the heat of the sun becomes too oppressive for field labor. These females, though sadly in want of a good shower-bath, and a thorough application of the comb, looked remarkably healthy and robust, and some of the younger ones might even have laid claim to good looks had they not spoiled their natural appearance with abominable and indelible tattoo marks of indigo blue and scarlet, in the manner so customary with our marines and sailors. These men generally content themselves with disfiguring the skin on the inside of their fore-arms only, but the Moslem women are not satisfied with that, but mark their foreheads between the eye-

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brows, the chin, around the neck, in the middle of the chest, the back of the hands, around the wrists and ankles, etc. These tattoo marks, though as common a sight with Mohammedan females, as the wearing of finger and earrings by women of civilized nations are never seen on the person of a Jewish female, because the imprinting of marks on the human body is forbidden by the Mosaic law.

Although it was scarcely afternoon when our caravan entered Ak Dejarin, Signor P. resolved to travel no further that day. Being justly proud of his rarely magnificent Arab horses, which he actually cared for and fostered like a doting mother, and, moreover, having a number of friends and acquaintances in Aleppo, which city he had frequently visited on previous journeys in search of Arab horses, he was naturally anxious to enter that city with "flying colors," an innocent vanity quite excusable in the veteran. It was, therefore, his intention to spend the remainder of the day in getting everything in perfect order.

Our little farrier Hajji Mohammed, and his assistant, received strict orders to carefully overhaul the hoofs and shoes of every horse, mule and donkey in the caravan. The "sais" (grooms) and mukāries were enjoined to groom, wash, comb and brush every animal in their charge, as well as to get their own person in order, and to clean every saddle, bridle, blanket, pack-saddle, or other equine outfit, improvements which were very much needed, as may well be imagined, after so many weeks' tedious travel. Even we Europeans found an improvement in our personal appearance highly desirable. In order to effect this, our trunks, hitherto hardly opened since our departure from Bagdad, were made to disgorge clean wearing apparel, scissors, razors, soap, etc.

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XXVIII.

BOUND FOR ALEPPO.

Desert—Armenian Caravan—Fertile and Beautiful Valley—Aleppo River—Aleppo in the Distance—Mohammed Cemetery—Gateway to Aleppo—Received at the Consulate—Sumptuous Dinner—Attack on the Count's Caravan—Lost in Aleppo—Similarity of Streets—Ruins—The Aqueduct—Minarets.

The following morning the rising sun must have had difficulty in recognizing, in the much altered appearance of every man and beast of the caravan, the dusty, travel stained, neglected looking cavalcade of the previous day as we strode along briskly and cheerfully towards Aleppo. An hour's march brought us to a sinuous stream called Aleppo river, which winds its way along the base of a long range of low hills (arid and of limestone) in a southeasterly direction towards the great city. The whole country south of Ak Dejarin abruptly reassumes that stony arid and utterly desolate aspect so characteristic of the plains of Upper Mesopotamia. It surpasses the latter in this respect, and presents to the eye absolutely the dismal appearance of veritable desert.

After crossing this stream, the road became beautifully rugged, and rather difficult to travel. Not a living being was visible anywhere, except immense clouds of the oftmentioned sand grouse which rose up from the barren gravelly ground in every direction. For many miles we had entirely lost sight of the Aleppo river, but about two hours after parting with it we saw it again about half a mile to the right of our road pursuing its tortuous course towards the South. Thenceforward its course was distinctly indicated by an ap-

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parently interminable streak of dark green-forest trees and bushes which densely lined both sides of the stream, in the centre of the narrow valley through which it meandered; the only vegetation around.

When within four miles of Aleppo, we met a large caravan, composed of Aleppine merchants, chiefly Jews and Armenians, some with their wives and children, and a few Turkish officers and soldiers, the latter probably on their way to the garrison of Diarbekir, Mossul, or Bagdad. All of those travellers were mounted on ghedishes (common road horses) and mules, and eyed us with great curiosity, evidently perceiving by the costumes of many of our men, that we came from Lower Mesopotamia, and astonished no doubt at our trim appearance after so long a journey.

Shortly after passing the caravan, the road led down into a deep ravine, and up again on the other side. Then we passed between several fine villas or country seats, built in the genuine Oriental style, surrounded by extensive grounds, encircled by low stone walls, and studded with fine shade and fruit trees, fragrant bushes, patches of Indian Corn, etc., strangely and pleasantly contrasting with the calcined, arid country all around. Every handful of the fertile soil of these luxuriant gardens must have been taken there from a considerable distance, and can be kept fertile and rendered productive only by constant artificial irrigation; but where the requisite water is obtained, I am at the loss to determine, as the nearest water which I could discover was that of the Aleppo several hundred yards off, and at least seventy feet below the level of those villas; although it is more than probable that the water requisite for irrigation is brought from the river, carried on the backs of camels, horses and mules in large tooloochs.

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The pleasant picture above described soon vanished from our eyes, and after marching a few hundred yards further, we again found ourselves travelling over parched and stony ground, along the northern slope of a low hill; but before long we preceived, to our intense satisfaction, that the narrow streak of dark green woods along the banks of the Nahrel-Haleb became broader and broader, and shortly after we saw it extend to the valley on our left to the size of a vast park, a sure proof that we had nearly our goal, and would presently be in full view of the city of Aleppo. Our supposition proved correct, for as soon as we arrived on the crest of a low gravelly hill, we surveyed at a distance of less than a mile the entire northern part of the city looming up silently and solemnly from the bottom of a shallow, barren valley, or rather basin bordered on the North by the rivulet Apello River, which there irrigates a large area of the most luxurious gardens, studded with clusters of stately shade and fruit trees, to all appearances the only vegetation visible within a day's journey of Aleppo, which, surrounded as it is by a most desolate looking country, presents to the stranger a majestic (though not inviting) picture with its thousands upon thousands of buildings of every description; its hundreds of minarets and mosques, glittering in the scorching rays of the sun, and thus rendering, by the injury of the sight, a good view of the city between sunrise and sunset, almost an impossibility.

But what gives to Aleppo a peculiarly grand and imposing aspect is the huge castle or citadel which towers fully two hundred feet above the base of the town, on the crest of a steep, inaccessible height, rising abruptly and phantom-like out of the very heart of Aleppo. It was about one o'clock in the afternoon

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when we first got sight of the city. The heat of the sun had by this time become dreadfully oppressive; the arid and stony ground over which we travelled fairly glowed underfoot, and its peculiar white, intensified by the glare of the fiery orb, was absolutely painful to the eyes of man and beast.

Shortly after our arriving in sight of the town, our route again led us along the northern slope of a low hill adjacent to the city. The entire surface of this hill, for a distance of a mile or more, was one vast burial ground bristling with at least two hundred thousand tombstones; the majority, if not all of them, "in memoriam" of deceased Moslems, to judge from their shape, emblems, and inscriptions. To my intense relief, I noticed that a large proportion of them were a great many years old; the "faithful" buried beneath them having long ago joined Mohammed, the prophet, in Paradise, and had undoubtedly by that time fully accustomed themselves to the company of the charming Hural-Oyun (Houris, or black-eyed fairies of ravishing beauty, bodily perfection, and composed of pure musk) promised by Mohammed the prophet to his followers, as their constant attendants from the day of their entrance into Paradise. Heartily glad that it was not I who enjoyed this privilege, I passed on in silence, and, with the caravan, entered the northern gate of Aleppo.

A zig-zag march of about half a mile through narrow, roughly paved, unclean streets, or lanes, flanked on both sides by gloomy looking, though substantial brick and stone buildings of considerable size, some of them erected right over the streets, thus forming vaulted passages or archways, we struck into a wider, better paved street than we had seen anywhere in Syria and Mesopotamia. It led through the European

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quarter of the city. Even if we had not met any person in this street with European costumes or manners, other things would have given us proof that this was the haunt of Europeans, such as the following: coffee, wine and billiard-rooms; liquor, boot and shoe stores; chemists' shops, and other miscellaneous establishments stocked with European goods, and furnished in European style, many of them bearing sign-boards exhibiting European names and inscriptions in French, Italian, or Greek.

Proceeding along this nearly level street almost to its upper end, we suddenly came to a halt before a long two-story building of stone, with green blinds and iron-barred windows, the latter actually filled with panes of window glass, a rather rare and costly article throughout the Orient, but especially in the interior of Asiatic Turkey, and a luxury indulged in by wealthy Europeans and Americans only, as a rule. A spacious arched gateway, closed by a ponderous door of wood, covered with a sheet of wrought-iron, constituted the entrance to this building, and to a spacious court-yard in its centre, filled with chests and bales of European and Asiatic merchandise, the former having just arrived by caravan from the shores of the Mediterranean, the latter awaiting transport thither by the same medium. This building proved to be the residence of Mr. St., a Swiss gentleman and one of the principals of the firm of St. Z. & Co., a long established Swiss mercantile house of Aleppo, and the leading firm of the place, who use the building described as their office, place of business and storehouse, and as the residence of the family of the senior of the firm.

As may be supposed, these gentlemen had long before been apprized by Messrs. J. W. & Co., of

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Bagdad and Mossul, their business agents and friends in Mesopotamia, of our departure from Bagdad and subsequently from Mossul, and had been expecting us for several days. Our caravan had hardly reached the gate of the city before the news of our arrival had been reported to them, so that when we drew up before their office, one of the firm and a number of employees stood ready for us, at the gate of the building, to give us a hearty reception. After the exchange of the usual salutations, we were informed that a spacious and convenient khan, or caravansary, called Khan-el-Katab, situated in the western suburbs of the city, between the city walls and the gardens before mentioned, had been expressly engaged for our caravan during its sojourn in Aleppo. As for the European members of the caravan, we were all cordially invited to take up our quarters at the residence of Messrs. St. and Z. Signor P. thankfully declined, pleading the absolute necessity of his staying with the valuable horses in his charge.

Father M., the young missionary, held, as usual, letters of introduction to his clerical brothers in the town, with whom he was to stay. As for myself, having neither horse-flesh or clerical brethern to influence, I gladly accepted the kind invitation, having, by that time, become heartly sick of filthy quarters in caravansaries and open air camping and sincerely longing for even a temporary change.

After unloading my luggage, the caravan, headed by Signor P., and piloted by one of the employees of the house, proceeded to the Khan el Katab. A servant guided Father M. to the convent, while I was installed in the snug residence of Mr. St., who had so kindly tendered his hospitality. During my ten days' visit, the social Mr. St. and his amiable wife, the ever affable Mr. and Mrs. Z, and the four young gentlemen em-

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ployed by the firm, vied with each other in rendering my sojourn among them as agreeable as possible; and treated Signor P. also with marked attention and genuine kindness whenever he called.

On the evening of our arrival, our hosts gave us a sumptuous dinner at the residence of Mr. Z., a large substantial building of the pure Syrian style of architecture, located about two hundred yards distant from the residence of Mr. St., from which latter it is separated by the lower branch of the bazaar.

During the course of the evening, Signor P. and I heard for the first time the truth about the accident which had happened to the caravan of the Count de B., who left Bagdad a few hours before us at the head of a small camel caravan bound to Beyrout, the principal seaport of the Syrian coast, *via* Damascus, accompanied by two ladies, the mother, wife of Monsieur P., then consul of France at Bagdad.

Count de B., although warned against the dangers incident to the journey across the desert of El Jesîreh, would not take the circuitous northern route, which we followed, but left us at Mossul in a rather abrupt manner, struck direct across the arid plains of El Jesîreh, in a westerly direction toward Jebl Sindshar (Sindshar mountains), two days' journey west of which mountain chain, he was said to have been attacked and killed, together with some of his men, by a gang of marauding Bedouins, as reported to us at Nisibin by an Arab trader, who had arrived from that region. It will also be remembered that we doubted the truth of the report of his murder, although we could not doubt that some accident had happened to the caravan.

Count de B. having at the head of his caravan left Aleppo for Beyront, *via* Ibamah and Iboms (intermediate cities), only a fortnight previous to our own

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arrival, and having, like myself, been the guest of Messrs. St. and Z., these gentlemen had of course heard all the particulars of the accident from the lips of Count de B. and the two ladies accompanying him. It was true that their caravan had been attacked by marauding Bedouins in the desolate locality mentioned, but nobody was killed on their side. The caravan had left Mossul hale and hearty and journeyed very cautiously for several days across the arid region without noticing the least sign of danger from any quarter—without even meeting with, or seeing any Bedouin camps on the vast plains. In due time they reached the little natron-lake of Katunya at the western base of Jebl Sindshar, a district still more desolate than the one hitherto travelled over, and apparently uninhabited by man, but in his stead by large numbers of gazelles and other game, which could be seen roaming undisturbed over the apparently endless desert.

This was just the country where the utmost caution was necessary, as Bedouin marauders, fully aware of the fondness of most European travellers of hunting, especially where game is so plentiful, and as it were blissfully ignorant of the effect of gunpowder and lead, generally swoop down upon their victims in such localities where, only too frequently, a caravan is sorely weakened just by that portion of it which is most able to offer effective resistance, by its lagging behind while stalking or pursuing the game.

Although travelling over territory apparently destitute of human beings, and nothing within the range of eyesight to excite suspicion, travellers in the desert have frequently been followed for days by gangs of from ten to two hundred Bedouin marauders, well-armed and mounted on horses gifted with the marvellous speed and endurance of the gazelle.

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These vagabonds, bred and born in these dismal regions, know every inch of the territory; the slightest depression or elevation of the ground serves their scouts for ambush; and for this purpose the latter usually leave their horses with their accomplices; and as soon as an opportunity offers, the scout, by a sign with the hand, agreed upon beforehand, causes the whole gang, generally not far off, to dash from their hiding places and swoop down with amazing rapidity upon their unsuspecting victims from every direction, amidst demoniac yells and gestures intended to terrify their opponents and paralyze them with the shock. Their invariable "*ruse de guerre*" is a strenuous effort to scatter their victims. If unsuccessful in this strategem they endeavor to cut off that portion of the caravan which promises the richest booty, *i. e.*, the beasts of burden carrying the luggage or merchandise, which, if they do not succeed in driving off, they hamstring, rendering them useless forever, and of course unable to escape. Of course this is done to make it necessary to the caravan to abandon the goods, for want of animals to carry them, even if the traveller should prove victorious in the contest. The cruel hamstringing, however, is only practiced by these consummate villains when all other means of securing the booty proves abortive, for the vagabonds are shrewd enough never to forget that an able-bodied camel, horse, or mule is always of some value to the owner. If the main body of the caravan should seem too strong to be attacked, they take good care not to meddle with it. When they attack the rear, or the stragglers, they surround them from all sides, ride over, or despatch them with their long lances (for they seldom use firearms, lest the noise of the gun should alarm the main body of the caravan and thus defeat their purpose), then make off

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as speedily as possible with their booty. When not obstinately opposed or irritated by the loss of any of their comrades, these highwaymen of the desert, after conquering their victims, usually content themselves with taking possession of all the valuables of the latter, often including the camels, horses, mules, etc., even the clothes of the travellers (except European or American wearing apparel, which is all but useless to them). Pocket-books and letters are torn open with avidity, as they may contain precious stones, pearls, etc.; but if found empty they are either returned to the owner or destroyed in disgust. Occasionally, the unfortunate victims, out of sheer malice or deviltry, are stripped of every particle of their clothing, even their hats and shoes, and allowed to proceed on their journey in a state of entire nudity, to die a miserable death by sunstroke, or suffer a thousand agonies during their awful journey on foot, bareheaded, barefooted, and in every way exposed to the scorching sun and the burning sands of the desert. Such occurrences are by no means rare in some parts of Arabia, Mesopotamia and Syria, as many an American or European traveller can testify.

Count de B., who had travelled several days over the plains of El Jesireh without noticing anything suspicious, became negligent of the necessary precautions, so that when the caravan reached the arid plains west of Jebl Sindshar, where gazelles, wild pigs, and other game abound, his love of sport "got the better of him," and caused him to allow the main body of the caravan to jog on at its usual pace, while he, with four of his best horses and three of his servants, lagged a few hundred yards behind, or strayed that distance from the track in search of game; they were well armed, and Count de B. had had considerable experience in Oriental

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travel, yet they were much surprised when a troop of some twenty Bedouin horsemen silently and suddenly spread over the ground between the little party and the caravan. Count de B. had only a few weeks before visited the Bedouin tribes of the vast desert lying between Damascus and Bagdad, in the official capacity of delegate from the mercantile community of the port of Beyrout, for the purpose of opening a short and direct route between Beyrout and Bagdad; and had in this capacity drawn up and signed written contracts with the sheiks of the various Bedouin tribes, who, roaming the territory along the proposed direct caravan route, had received valuable monetary subsidies in consideration of their guaranteeing a free and unmolested passage for caravans across their territory.

Count de B., the delegate, was naturally thunderstruck at finding himself waylaid, and on the point of being attacked by some of the inhabitants of the very territory for which he had made the contract of a free and unimpeded passage, and had at that very time the document upon his person. The suspicious movements and evolutions of the vagabonds could not be mistaken. They clearly intended to intercept Count de B. and his companions, and to prevent him from rejoining the caravan. Count de B. saw this at a glance. He knew that if they should succeed in capturing him and his attendants, the villains would not only strip them to the very skin and perhaps murder them, but would, emboldened by success, immediately attack the caravan itself, deprived, as it would be, of its leader and best armed men. Fortunately, Count de B., tried soldier and experienced Oriental traveller as he was, could not be frightened out of his self-possession. Explaining to his attendants, in a few appropriate words, their desperate situation, he ordered them to follow him where-

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ever he went; to prepare for a fight, and to try their best to break through the picket of the Bedouin marauders, who drew a circle closer and closer around the gallant little party. Unfortunately for the latter, their caravan was about half a mile in advance at the time of their first discovering the suspicious horsemen, and entirely out of sight owing to the undulatory character of the ground in that locality; otherwise, a single shot fired by the little party in distress would have sufficed to attract the attention of the caravan, and would probably have brought it back to their assistance. As matters stood, however, Count de B. and his servants had either to cut a passage through the contracting circle of Bedouins, or surrender themselves to the tender mercies of the latter. They chose the former, well knowing that they had little of magnanimity to expect from the ruffians.

Full tilt they ran the gauntlet. Count de B., an athletic, heavy man, a splendid horseman to boot, mounted on a powerful horse, his double-barrelled gun in hand, in advance. The Bedouins, with their long lances in position, dashed towards the spot where, according to all appearances, the little band attempted to break through the circle. Count de B., however, when within thirty yards, discharged the contents of both barrels into the crowd, unhorsing two of them, and then abruptly wheeled his charger around, and broke through on the opposite side, where there were only two or three of the ruffians to oppose his furious onset, but stationed so far apart that he, with two of his followers, managed to slip between them before they could close up the gap. The third servant, however, was less fortunate. Either through inattention or inability to turn his horse, he did not swerve around with his companions, but rushed right

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into the midst of the enemy. While firing off his gun, his horse, startled by the writhing forms of the two Bedouins on the ground, who had been unhorsed by Count de B., reared. His well meant dose of powder and shot went harmlessly into the air, and almost simultaneously he received a thrust with a lance in his abdomen, and fell from the saddle bleeding. A few of the robbers took care of him and his horse, while the bulk of the gang dashed after the three fugitives, who sped away at a terrific pace toward the caravan. The Bedouins, also splendidly mounted, made strenuous exertions to overtake them. Fortune seemed propitious to their nefarious purpose, for they succeeded in capturing all except Count de B., whose charger was more than a match for any of their own horses, and had carried its master safely beyond the reach of their lances and inferior firearms, of which latter they made an energetic use during the pursuit in the hope of crippling the faithful steed of the fugitive. No sooner had Count de B. reached a slight elevation of the ground, whence he could see his caravan only a few hundred yards further on, than the robbers abruptly gave up the chase and galloped back to where their accomplices were with the confiscated horses, firearms, clothing, etc., of the three captives. A moment after the entire gang disappeared with their booty at the top of their horses' speed, so that by the time Count de B. reappeared on the scene, reinforced by his entire caravan, he saw them vanish from view on the distant horizon enveloped in a cloud of dust. His three servants, however, he found in a sorry plight, slowly advancing towards the caravan, stripped to the very skin; the two who had been captured kindly supporting the one who was wounded by the lance of one of the marauders.

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They had all been rather roughly handled by the highwaymen; the two former, although not dangerously wounded by their captors, had sustained severe bruises by falling from their horses, one of them by his falling accidentally, and the other had been unhorsed in his flight by one of his fleet pursuers. The poor fellow who had been stabbed in the abdomen was besmeared with blood which flowed from the deep gash. Notwithstanding his terrible sufferings, the unfortunate man had walked quite a distance, supported by his two fellow sufferers, but by the time the caravan reached them he was nearly fainting from loss of blood. Of course he was taken care of forthwith, and his wound properly dressed; but as there was not a drop of water in the neighborhood, the caravan could not camp on the spot, but was compelled to proceed slowly some ten miles further, with the wounded man carried on a litter, borne by two mules, until they arrived upon the banks of the river Hesawi. He had through this accident lost three fine horses (one of them a splendid thoroughbred little black mare, the property of the younger of the two ladies who travelled with him to Beyrout), and their equipments, two double-barrelled guns, and one revolver, while the three servants lost all their clothing.

Had the latter not been Moslems, or offered an obstinate resistance, they would have been killed by their captors, a fate that would certainly have befallen their master had he not made good his escape. The servants declared that Count de B.'s shots, which had brought down two of the ruffians, must have wounded both of them severely, as one of them was unable to regain his saddle without assistance, and was supported on the right and left of his horse by his comrades, and the other could not sit in the saddle at all, and was

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carried off by a burly fellow on a powerful horse. The servants had been closely questioned by their captors about the nature of the goods carried by the camels of the caravan; but on being told that they were not valuable, and were principally wearing apparel belonging to the two Feringhee women, they seemed greatly disappointed, as if they were sorry they had taken so much trouble and risk for the sake of valueless plunder. One of the ruffians, evidently considering himself shrewder than the rest, inquired whether the two ladies were not the wives of some sheik of "Feringhistan" (Europe), and receiving a negative answer, he snapped his fingers (a token of disgust among the Bedouins) at the poor prospect of a remunerative "haul." Count de B., though doubting the probability of another attack from the same band, judged it prudent to keep a good lookout during the night for "surprise parties," and stood sentinel himself all night with part of his men.

The wounded man, who, by the way, was the Count's head saïs (groom), grew worse hourly, inflammation having set in, aggravated, no doubt, by his unavoidable transportation over ten miles of the road, and his agony increased, until about two o'clock in the morning, when death relieved him from his earthly sufferings. By daybreak Count de B. caused two of his men to dig a grave in the rear of their tents for their deceased companion, and the victim of man's rapacity was silently deposited in the bosom of mother earth. A layer of rude stone slabs, procured at the river, and covered with heavy stones to prevent hyenas and jackals from exhuming the remains, formed the poor fellow's monument; and there, in the dismal desert, he awaits the general resurrection prophesied and promised by Mohammed, the prophet, as the reward

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of every true believer in "Islam" (submission to the will and dictates of God). The two French ladies of the caravan, naturally delicate in health and nervous, had received such a severe shock, during the course of that sad day, that they were more dead than alive, and it was not until after midnight that they sank into a sort of comatose condition which lasted until sunrise. Their first inquiry on awaking was about the condition of the wounded man, and Count de B., unwilling to add to their distress, said he was "all right." When, however, the elder lady issued from the tent to look for the patient, the Count was obliged to inform her of the man's demise and burial, and she in turn informed her daughter-in-law of the painful occurrence. This sad event, of course, cast a gloom over the whole caravan for many a day.

Much of the time of my sojourn in the town of Aleppo was spent in daily visits to my estimable travelling companion, Signor P., who was comfortably installed with his caravan in the spacious, shady courtyard of the khan "El Katab," and (unintentionally on his part) was made "the lion" of the day by the good people of Aleppo, his headquarters being invaded from early morning until night by numbers of friends and curious visitors, all anxious to inspect the splendid equine specimens whose fame had already spread over the city.

Between receiving so many visitors, superintending the daily work of the grooms and the drivers of pack-horses and mules, scouring the vast "sookh" (Arabic for "bazaar") for the purpose of purchasing provisions and other requisites for man and beast, and attending to his financial affairs at the office of Messrs. St. Z. & Co., the head of our caravan had but very little spare time left for making visits himself, or in-

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specting the points of interest in Aleppo. Almost the first thing he did, after installing himself in the khan "El Katab," was to go to the French nunnery to beg the Lady Superior of the convent to take care of "Bahri," the negro girl, who, the reader will remember, was bought by Signor P. from a slave dealer of Bagdad, for the original purpose of making a present to his daughters, whom he had placed in a young ladies' boarding-school of the city of Smyrna, in Asia Minor, to whom she would have been assigned as waiting-maid. The girl, evincing an unbiased and ardent desire to become a Christian, he felt as if he could not treat her as a slave, and before leaving Bagdad he gave her her freedom. Just before we left Bagdad she fervently implored Signor P. not to abandon her, but to take her with him, and permit her to be a servant in his family. Signor P., moved by her earnest pleading, her helpless state, and laudable traits of character, consented, and she continued with us during the entire journey, attired in Armenian male costume, except during our sojourn at Mossul and Diarbekir, when she dressed in the garb of European females. The wearing of male attire while travelling with us was due to the suggestion of Signor P., who was justly of the opinion that a person in male costume can sit a saddle more comfortably and firmer than in any female dress, especially so as side saddles are quite unknown to Oriental females.

Signor P.'s object in applying at the convent for the admission of the negro girl was that she might be instructed in the Roman Catholic faith and the Arabian language, she having been kidnapped from her home in Abyssinia only about a year before, and had not learned the language of the country.

The lady superior readily consented to take charge

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of the girl during Signor P.'s sojourn at Aleppo; and Bahri, or Maria (by which Christain name she delighted to be called), was removed without delay to the convent, where she remained until the hour of our departure from that city.

Commercial business not being very brisk at the time of our arrival at Aleppo, my host, Mr. St., was kind enough to allow one of the four European young gentlemen in the employ of the firm to accompany me in my rambles through the city, because on the second day after our arrival, disliking to interrupt the business of my host, I had wandered off myself through the intricate network of the sinuous streets and lanes of Aleppo. I roamed about for hours, and was so absorbed in contemplation of everything around me that I totally forgot to note the erratic course of my rambles, and the natural consequence was that when luncheon time was near, and I bethought myself of returning to headquarters, and started therefor, after marching briskly for over two hours, I found myself at the very spot from which I had started, perspiring like a race-horse. I finally succeeded in finding my headquarters just in time for dinner, and causing a perfect storm of laughter by my tale of woe. It is no easy matter for foreigners, those especially who do not understand the language of the country, to walk out without losing themselves, unless accompanied by a native or some one else who can speak the language of a Moslem city. The streets are not named, the houses are not numbered, and one house can scarcely be distinguished from another; indeed, walking through the majority of the streets and lanes of a Moslem city for one familiar with the characteristics of Oriental daily life, is about as interesting as the march through the trenches of a fortress must be to a soldier, or the rope walk to the rope

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maker, and it is this very monotony of the surroundings which confuses the inexperienced stranger while wandering through the minor streets of a Moslem city.

A friend undertook to walk from one house to another, a distance of less than three hundred yards, and by losing his way took over four hours to accomplish the task. I know of another party similarly situated, who went from one house to another, scarcely a stone's throw apart, and on starting to return, one hour afterwards, would probably not have found his way back without assistance, if he had walked till doomsday. He could not speak a word of Arabic, Turkish or Persian; nor could he for the life of him remember the exact outward appearance of the house. Fortunately, he met a European gentleman, while straying about on the opposite end of the city, and this party very kindly escorted him to the place of destination.

After my own unpleasant acquaintance with the topography of Aleppo, I was always pleased to be accompanied, in my subsequent rambles, by one or the other of the gentlemen of the house, especially as they were very obliging and anxious to show me everything of interest. Aleppo is the largest town of Northern Syria and the capital of the pashalic of Aleppo. It contains at present a population of ninety thousand, of which nearly one-fourth are Christians (a few of them Europeans), and about five thousand Jews, while the majority of the inhabitants are Moslems.

Aleppo, however, bears ample evidence of having formerly contained a much larger population, which is said to have been over two hundred thousand as late as 1822, when a terrible earthquake destroyed not only the greater part of the famous city, but also

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fully two-thirds of its inhabitants. Heaps of ruins are to be met with in almost every quarter of the town, as well as in its suburbs, silent yet eloquent witnesses of that terrible catastrophe. One of the greatest commercial centers of the Orient before the earthquake, Aleppo would soon have recovered its former size and importance had it not been decimated five years afterwards by the plague. The cholera, the direful scourge of the present century, swept away another large portion of the remaining population during the year 1832, and the cruelly oppressive rule of the Egyptian tyrant, Mehemet Ali, who had wrested the whole of Syria from the Turks immediately after the disappearance of the deadly epidemic from Aleppo, and held it with an iron grasp till 1840, continued the misfortunes of the doomed city, In 1865, the ravages of the cholera destroyed eighteen thousand lives.

After passing through these terrible afflictions, unheard of in the history of any city in the world, within the short period of forty-three years, it is only astonishing that it was not entirely abandoned by its people. The origin of the city is supposed to date back to the beginning of the Mohammedan era; at any rate it was a place of importance, and a formidable stronghold of the Saracens in the time of the Crusades. Aleppo is somewhat better built than the majority of towns in that part of the world. It contains a larger number of decent buildings than any place hitherto described. The greater portion of its thoroughfares are cleaner, better paved, and wider than the average of the streets in Syrian, Mesopotamian, Arabian and Persian towns; but its site is rather uneven, and its thoroughfares correspondingly so. Nearly all the buildings are of the pure Moslem style; only a few of them in the Frankish or European quarter

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mingling with Oriental architecture and exhibiting some of the European conveniences, such as glass windows, shutters, awnings, balconies, sign boards, etc., towards the street. The cleanest, wealthiest and best part of the town is the northern portion, which, beside the Frankish quarter, contains that in which the Christians live, and the district where the richest part of the bazaar is located. The majority of the buildings in this section are good sized, substantial brick, and gray stone structures, from two to three stories high; and those which are inhabited by the wealthier classes are very comfortably arranged inside, richly ornamented with Arabesques, stucco, mosaic, and marble floors, etc., and otherwise furnished in gorgeous Oriental style.

The Jewish and Moslem quarters of the city are less inviting, the thoroughfares being narrower, dirty and crooked, and the most of the buildings decidedly shabby and gloomy in outward appearance, though many of them are inhabited by opulent people who, however, generally spend more money on the interior than the exterior of their residences, and live in true Oriental luxury in buildings which look more like bleak prisons than homes.

The oldest structure in Aleppo is said to be the aqueduct, which is composed of two tiers of lofty arches, one tier built above the other, and supporting a water course, or small canal, which formerly supplied the town with water; but the greater part of it is in ruins, all that is left being scarcely six hundred yards in length and broken off abruptly at both ends, probably the effect of the earthquake. It is in the eastern part of the town, and owing to its ghastly white appearance, and towering height, is visible at a great distance. Close by the aqueduct, and built on a gently rising slope, are a number of large, massive, gray-stone

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buildings. These are of modern construction and are used as barracks by the Turkish garrison. A short distance from the European quarters, between it and the bazaar, stands the only building of European architecture in Aleppo; it is an object of great interest to every European of any feeling as a venerable relic of bygone ages. This structure is, or rather was, a church said to have been erected by the Crusaders about the beginning of the twelfth century; but it figures now as a Moslem institution. The nave of the venerable church is used as a school-room for Moslem children, and the quadrangular tower as a minaret. From the outside balcony, near the top of this improvised minaret, the "muëzzin" chants now five times every twenty-four hours, with melodious voice, the "Adān" (call) by which the "faithful" Moslems are called to prayer; and which, translated into English, is worded as follows by all muëzzins throughout the world, wherever the crescent sways: "Allah is most great." "I testify that there is no God, but Allah." "I testify that Mohammed is the apostle of Allah." "Come to prayer." "Come to security." The "Adān" is invariably repeated several times, at short intervals, to insure attention. The first of the five times, at about sunset (Móhgrib), Moslems count the days from sunset to sunset; the second at nightfall (Ésheh), the third at dawn (Sūbah), the fourth at noon (Dûr), and the fifth in the afternoon (Asser), the latter corresponding to the hour of four P. M. In many Moslem countries where the heat of the climate compels the population to spend the night on the flat roofs of the buildings, the office of muëzzin is only given to blind or near-sighted men, as the persons least likely to take advantage of their elevated position, when pacing the lofty balconies near the top of the minarets, by peering into the privacy of marital and harem life.

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In Aleppo and other districts situated in the same or a still higher latitude, this caution is scarcely necessary, as in those regions the coolness of the night and the falling dew render the inside of the dwellings preferable during the greater part of the year. That the building above referred to, as a relic of the Crusaders, is really of European architecture (probably Saxon) there is not a doubt, as the entire outward appearance of the square, massive tower (about one hundred and twenty feet in height) of the large quadrangular structure of the church itself, and the position, shape and size of the doors, windows, ornaments, etc., clearly demonstrate. The tower, although now used as a minaret, has undergone scarcely any alteration beyond the addition of the necessary balcony near its top, required by every minaret. As for the church, it is outwardly still in its original shape excepting its roof, which is now flat and of the true Moslem style, and the openings for the windows are filled in with masonry; the interior of the building being lighted probably through the roof.

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XXIX.

IN ALEPPO.

A Visit to the Citadel—The Sentinel—Strength of the Fortress—View of the Gardens—Dress Parade—Workshops and Storehouses—Our Aleppo Merchants—European Fashions—Aleppine Women—Their Recreation—Preparing to Resume our Journey—A Ludicrous Incident—Our Adonis Guide.

The most elevated and unquestionably most attractive point to the beholder, from the outside of the city, is the huge conical rocky mound in the centre of the city, with the gloomy and almost inaccessible castle or citadel on its summit. This citadel covers about two acres of ground, is of a regular octagon shape, and commands not only every part of the city, but the entire shallow valley or basin in which the city of Aleppo stands. A large, but now dry ditch about fifty feet deep, and at least one hundred feet wide, encircles the base of the mound. The outer limit of this ditch is a perpendicular wall of solid masonry, the inner is formed by the lofty, almost perpendicular, rock on which the citadel stands, so that access to the latter can be gained only by means of a drawbridge placed on the south side of the fortress.

As there is no difficulty in obtaining permission to enter and examine the castle, I visited it in company with my host and several of the gentlemen of the house. The two Turkish soldiers, who stood sentinel at the entrance of the drawbridge, allowed us to pass them unmolested, even presented arms as we went by. A magnificent arch of Saracenic workmanship, richly ornamented with arabesques, rises high over the gateway of the citadel, the ponderous iron gate of which

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stood wide open. Here were posted two other sentinels, one of whom, as we approached, shouted something in Turkish; whereupon a sergeant issued from a niche in enormously thick walls, and saluting, while the sentnels presented arms, as we passed in, led us, without asking a question, to the commander of the garrison, who together with some other officers, all of them in rather lax undress uniform, sat smoking in the shade of a knotty tree that grew in front of a small weather beaten stone building improvised as a coffee house.

After the usual salute, and the senior officer's polite inquiry as to our wishes, he ordered one of the younger officers, who, spoke Arabic tolerably well, to show us around the citadel. We found everything in a neglected, dilapidated state, especially the parapets or battlements, which had nearly crumbled to pieces or otherwise disappeared in many places. Not more than forty guns were visible on the walls; all iron-guns of small calibre; none larger than a twenty-four pounder, smooth bored, of a very old pattern, and resting on rough, rickety wooden gun carriages, and having the appearance of not having been used in many years. The view which we enjoyed from the lofty crest of the citadel of the imposing city lying at our feet, and the magnificent gardens which surround it on the north and west, was charming. All the country round this wonderful oasis was calcined and arid, studded, only here and there, by wretched hamlets, caravansaries, etc.; and enlivened by occasional troops of dashing horsemen in spectre-like Bedouin garb; and long lines of slowly moving camel caravans; scattered herds of sheep and goats wandering about in quest of their scanty food; and the motley crowd of promenaders lounging about the luxuriant gardens and the vast cemeteries in

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the suburbs of the city. Everything combined to present to the eye a panorama of ravishing beauty of the genuine Oriental type. The magazines and barracks of the citadel, we found, like everything else in the fortress, in a deplorably neglected condition. Rude quadrangular structures of careless masonry, covered with flat roofs, dark, gloomy and badly ventilated, and scarcely fit to be inhabited by human beings (principally on account of their filth), even by the slovenly, easily satisfied Turkish soldier. These poor fellows, about three hundred in number, were having a "washing day," when we visited the fortress, and it was apparently a rare occurrence, to judge by the general appearance of that portion of clothing which had not yet undergone the process of cleansing after the Oriental fashion. Their system of washing is to pound the articles of clothing with the feet, while wet with water, or batter with a flat stick, or slap upon the surface of a smooth stone slab unceasingly, until it assumes a shade somewhat resembling what it ought to have. The water is furnished by two large open cisterns of rain water sunk deeply into the ground. An artesian well of enormous depth furnishes plenty of ice cold, pure water to quench the thirst of the garrison, and it is situated right in the centre of the citadel. A few knotty fruit and shade trees grow out of heaps of rubbish, which, before the earthquake of 1882, constituted the barracks, magazines, etc., of the stronghold, and give by their fresh green foliage a rather cheerful appearance to the otherwise dreary aspect of this old Saracenic fortress. A number of fine horses, the property of the officers of the garrison, picketed in a group close to the officer's quarters, contributed likewise to enliven the scene within the fort.

The walls of the citadel are fully fifty feet high

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and twelve feet thick, composed of hard, heavy stones, and are still in tolerably good preservation. The area of the interior of the citadel is divided into four or five distinct areas of smaller size by walls of about fifteen feet in height and three feet in thickness, pierced by gateways provided with ponderous wooden doors sheathed with wrought iron.

The citadel of Aleppo has sustained many a siege and repulsed many an assault, and was formerly considered impregnable. Nearly opposite the drawbridge is a large open space of ground, part of which is used as a drill-ground by the garrison; the other part as a horse, mule, camel and cattle market. By far the most interesting portion of the interior of the city is indisputably the "sookh," or bazaar, which extends over a large area of ground, beginning near the end of the main street of the European quarter, and gently ascending toward the citadel, which it almost reaches. It is stocked profusely with European and Asiatic manufactures and produce, and is justly considered the richest and most extensive bazaar of Western Asia, the immense number of its stalls exhibiting an endless variety of goods of every description; the workshops of thousands of industrious tradesmen, full of noise and bustle from sunrise to sunset, and the deafening hum of about thirty thousand people of all ages, sexes, nationalities and creeds continually surging to and fro, on foot, on camels', horses' and donkeys' backs, all day long, through the labyrinth of interminable corridors or arched passages which receive air and light from above through large open skylights placed at regular distances. Some of these passages are of massive masonry; others only of wood; but all of them in a sort of gloomy twilight, and permeated by an atmosphere redolent with all kinds of odors, good and bad,

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peculiar to the Orient. These scenes are not readily described, nor are they soon forgotten by an eye-witness.

Aleppo, though at the present day so much less populous and prominent than when it ranked as the commercial centre of the East, is still of great importance as the principal inland mercantile depot of Northern Syria, Koordistan and Mesopotamia, with which it keeps up a large trade by means of numerous immense caravans. It imports all kinds of European manufactures, and exports large quantities of raw cotton, silk, sheep's wool, goats' hair, skins, tobacco, oil, wine, pistachios, gall-nuts, etc. The Aleppine merchants have the reputation of being shrewd and enterprising, and to excel, in this respect, those of almost any other place of Turkey in Asia; moreover, they are somewhat famous throughout the Orient for their polished conversation, neatness of person, and elegant manners, as indeed are the higher classes of both sexes of the population. The wealthier classes of the native Christians, owing to their daily intercourse with European residents and visitors to Aleppo, have gradually assumed various European manners and customs, such as social equality, mutual regard, and equality of sexes in society; with the use also of knives and spoons, boots and shoes, stockings, drawers, pantaloons, vests, coats, shirts, neckties; in fact many of the adjuncts of European dress and European jewelry, such as watches, lockets, etc. Notwithstanding this assumption of European attire, the male Aleppine Christian of fashion still adheres tenaciously to his genuine Oriental head covering, viz., the "Tarbush;" while the female Christian, however fashionable, just as conscientiously retains the customary "Esar," the ample shroud previously described as worn by all Oriental females. The Aleppine Christian female, however, makes a distinction between

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her Esar and that worn by her Hebrew or Moslem sisters; for while the latter wear only those which are colored, the former wear almost invariably snow-white, with very few exceptions, and this custom forms one of the most striking characteristics of Aleppo.

Being excessively fond of promenading at a very slow gait, and generally in groups numbering from three to twenty, these females may be seen at almost any time during daylight—except at noon, when the heat of the sun is intense—enveloped from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot in their spotless white Esars, standing still, or moving slowly along, among the innumerable tombstones of the vast graveyards. When seen from a distance of at least one hundred yards, these muffled, ghostly figures, followed by their shadows, among the tombstones, or under the weird mammoth trees of the gardens, present to the stranger a peculiar spectre-like appearance, and suggest the idea that they have just arisen from their silent graves. Notwithstanding their sepulchral costume, some of the fair Aleppine women are by no means disagreeable; for many of them are quite intelligent, social and lively—a very pleasant change to the stranger coming from the interior of the Turkish dominions, where the native women are dreadfully dull, ignorant, awkward and shy in conversation with foreigners. A large portion of the Aleppine Christian women are strikingly fair, and many among them are decidedly good-looking, if not beautiful. The skin of the younger females is almost of a waxy transparency, with a scarcely perceptible tinge of rose-color; the hair black or brown, luxuriant, lustrous, and slightly inclined to curl; the face oval and regular, and of a Greek type; the forehead well shaped; the eyebrows finely arched; the eyes large and soft, and embellished by long eyelashes; the nose also

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of the Greek shape; the mouth small, and furnished with small pearly-white teeth, and the chin is nicely rounded and in perfect proportion to the face. They are rather short in stature, but well formed, especially their hands and feet, which are small. Their carriage is very erect, and their gait invariably slow, as is usual with all Oriental females. Most of them are more or less inclined to *embonpoint*, undoubtedly the consequence of insufficient bodily exercise. The male portion of the Aleppine native Christians are also rather handsome, but somewhat vain and effeminate. The wealthier families have of late paid considerable attention to the better education of their children of both sexes, many of whom speak Greek, Italian and French quite fluently; a few even sing quite well and play on the piano.

The female Christians, indeed, have so far advanced in civilization that they have nearly discarded the abominable "Pajeh," that traditional quadrangular, stiff veil of black horse-hair cloth described in some previous page as worn by all the decent native women of the towns of Syria and Mesopotamia, and which has hitherto been considered a "sine qua non," or criterion of respectability, the abolition of which, in a country inhabited by a people so prejudiced and tenaciously opposed to civilization, certainly required a good deal of moral courage on the part of the Aleppine Christians, which is undeniably creditable to them. The chief recreation of the population of both sexes, and of all ages and creeds, but especially of the Christian portion, consists in daily promenades either in the forenoon, or late in the afternoon, through the suburbs of the city; but especially through the shady evergreen groves of the magnificent public gardens on both banks of the sinuous rivulet, Aleppo, where can be seen, at any time between sunrise and sunset, motley groups of Aleppines

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of both sexes squatted on the green sward, or on some shady spot, or ensconced in some retired arbor, chatting, laughing, singing, smoking, eating fruit and sweetmeats, and sipping rākee (arrack) and sherbet (lemonade), and after having indulged in a few hours "keif"—the Arabic term for amusement—they return slowly and silently to the city.

After an agreeable sojourn in Aleppo for about ten days, Signor P. informed me that his caravan would be ready to resume the journey to the Mediterranean Sea in two or three days, and if I would continue to travel with him, he would be highly pleased. Father M. was apprised of our intended departure, but, much to our regret, he informed us that he would have to take leave of us, as he intended to visit Jerusalem, proceed thence to Jaffa, the nearest seaport, and there take a steamer for France. We took an affectionate leave of our genial travelling companion, and went to work in earnest to prepare for our departure. Before leaving Aleppo, a ludicrous incident, that might have had serious results, created no little merriment among the members of the family and friends of my host; and the humble author of this work was the unconscious cause of it. Ever since my taking up quarters with Mr. St., I had noticed that his male cook, an old, but still robust man, a native Christian who rejoiced in the euphonious name of "Yacoob" (Jacob), became gradually infatuated with my English double-barrelled fowling piece, so much so that more than once, on suddenly entering my room, I surprised him engaged in handling it. He never seemed at all embarrassed by my unexpected appearance, and I concluded that he was partially deranged in mind, wherefore I never chid him for his intrusion. Nevertheless, I informed my host of the strange behavior of his caterer, insinuating at the

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same time that the old fellow might contemplate suicide, or murder, if he obtained ammunition.- Mr St. assured me that the cook never thought of such a thing, nor was he deranged in mind, on the contrary of sound judgment; that the old fellow was simply an inveterate sportsman, who would only work during the hot season of the year to earn money enough to enable him to go out shooting every day through the cool season, such game as snipe, quail, partridges, sand-grouse, pigeons, ducks, etc.; that the old fellow was disgusted with his single-barrelled shooting iron, and had long ago declared that his whole worldly ambition consisted in becoming the law proprietor of a double-barrelled gun, such as "Feringhies" use; that the old Nimrod had saved every Para (Turkish copper coin) of his wages in order to secure the coveted price; but being very fastidious in his choice, and a good judge of fire-arms, he would never buy one of those offered for sale in the bazaar. The old fellow had hitherto never mentioned it to me; but having learned that I was about to leave, and anxious not to lose such a rare chance, he mustered courage enough to ask me one day after supper, when I was alone, if I would sell him my gun. Observing his intense desire for an affirmative answer, and not deeming it necessary for my further protection, besides having a revolver left, I told him he could have the gun for six Turkish liras (about $27 American gold), which was about half its actual value. He instantly pulled out of his pocket an old handkerchief, untied one corner, and promptly counted out the necessary sum. I handed him the gun, which he eagerly grasped with the trembling hand of a miser, and taking my hand kissed it in true Oriental fashion in token of gratitude. He was about to leave the room, when I asked him if he would not like to

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have some ammunition. He said he would, and I gave him the contents of my powder flask, a handful of bullets, slugs and shot, and a lot of cartridges belonging to a revolver which I lost on the journey from Bagdad to Mossul. I gave him the latter because they did not fit my new revolver, and I thought he could make use of them by breaking out the bullets which protrudes from the copper shells, and could cast them over at his leisure; but the thought never struck me that he might be ignorant of the character of metallic cartridges, as he appeared to be perfectly well acquainted with every sort of fire-arm and ammunition, and the European gentlemen of the house used similar ammunition for their revolvers, all of which he must have seen, as he used to keep their rooms in order. The following morning, as I sat quietly at the breakfast table with the members of the household, we were suddenly startled by a terrific explosion resembling a brisk musketry fire, accompanied by an unearthly yell, and the shattering of window glass. Of course everybody sprang from the breakfast table in terror, and rushed out to see what had happened. We all supposed that the house was attacked by a mob and that some one had been killed. On reaching the hallway, however, a cloud of gunpowder smoke issued from the kitchen, and, on running thither, we beheld old Yacoob lying in a corner all in a heap, his face ashy pale, and bleeding profusely in several places, the kitchen floor strewn with cooking utensils, glass and crockery-ware of every description. The rest of the story is soon told. Good-natured, simple-minded old Yacoob, after trying vainly to extricate the bullets from the metallic cartridges, very shrewdly thought that the quickest way to separate the lead from the copper was to place the metallic cartridges in a ladle over the fire. Luckily there had

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been more noise than damage, and although old Yacoob was ignominiously flung into a corner, he escaped with a few superficial wounds; but I verily believe it was the first and the last time he ever attempted to roast metallic cartridges.

On the day previous to our departure our mukāries got into a fight with our Arab saïs about some trivial matter, which, but for the opportune return of Signor P., would have ended in bloodshed, as they were on the point of settling the difficulty with their curved daggers. Signor P., however, dismissed all the mukāries, as they were found to be the offenders, and thus restored peace. The remainder of the day was spent in engaging a gang of Aleppine mukāries in their stead, in getting Bahri from the convent, and in taking leave of our friends in Aleppo, *i. e.*, excepting those who were to accompany us in the morning to see us fairly on our way. By daybreak we started in the best of spirits. Half a dozen of our Aleppo friends, well-mounted, escorted us a few miles beyond the suburbs, until we reached a solitary well near to and on the left side of the road, the only thing that broke the dreadful monotony of the barren, calcined, low hill due west of Aleppo. There our friends took leave of us, bade us God speed, and leisurely cantered towards Aleppo, turning round in their saddles from time to time and waving their hats to us. On the crest of the hill we took one final view of Aleppo, and then lost sight of it as we went slowly down the hill. An unusually intelligent young Moslem, a horse dealer and resident in Aleppo, named Abdallah, a regular Adonis in figure and face, and clad in the charmingly picturesque costume of a merchant of Damascus (his birth-place), had joined our caravan on its departure from Aleppo, by permission of Signor P., who had dealt extensively in

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horseflesh with the deceased father of Abdallah, and had known the latter as a child. They had met in the bazaar at Aleppo, where the keen eye of the young man instantly recognized the veteran Italian, whom he had not seen for nearly twenty years. Having business to transact on the coast, young Abdallah asked and, of course, received permission to travel with us, and proved a very agreeable companion; and, as he spoke French and Italian quite fluently, was very entertaining, and knew perfectly every inch of ground over which we travelled. He was a brilliant horseman, and the break-neck evolutions wherewith he entertained us on the road, merely to break the tedium of our journey, would have astonished the most expert circus rider, and proved the lean and ugly old mare which he rode to be an animal of truly wonderful speed, endurance and sure-footedness, evidences of untarnished equine pedigree.

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XXX.

DIVERSIFIED SCENERY AND INCIDENT.

Moving Forward Lively—A Race—The Solitary Gazelle—Romantic History of the Depression—Merchandise Caravan—The Abandoned Orchard—Encamped in the Village—Drenched—Valley of the Afrin—The Plains—Boyda Eggs—Bathers—Queer Hamlet—Queer Looking People—Picketed for the Night.

For nearly two hours after parting with our friends, we travelled over the undulating gravelly, desolate country surrounding Aleppo. Then, Abdallah drew my attention to a low, gently rising mound at our right, and quite near the road. I did not see anything of interest about the mound, but he beckoned me to follow him. Being under the impression that he proposed to give me a race, I dug spurs into my nag, and was about to pass him at full speed, when he dexterously pulled, quick as lightning, my horse's bridle, and abruptly brought the animal to a full stop, nearly unhorsing me. At a loss what to think, I was about to upbraid him for it, when I discovered to my indescribable horror that I stood within a few yards of an immense yawning abyss. In an instant, however, I recovered from this shock to my nerves, and advancing cautiously with Abdallah a few feet further, stood on the very brink of an awful chasm, fairly shuddering as I gazed down at the wonderful work of nature. Imagine a perfectly circular piece of ground at least one thousand feet in diameter, comprising the entire upper portion of a gently rising hill, suddenly sunk to a depth of five hundred feet or more into the earth, the sides of the chasm thus created forming perpendicular walls, with here and there a dwarfish shrub clinging to them, and

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at the bottom of the chasm grew a solitary tree, and a few clusters of bushes, high above which soars the swallow and gyrates the preying, shrieking falcon. No other sound can be heard through the gravelike solitude of that weirdly wild and lonely spot; add to this the gloom which permeates the bottom of the chasm, except once a year, when the sun shines vertically into the hiatus.

"Many years before," said Abdallah, "a solitary gazelle could be seen grazing on the bottom of that abyss; but nobody could tell how the poor animal got there, and the general belief was that it fell into the chasm without injury. My theory is that the animal might have been lowered by means of a rope of the requisite length, a proceeding which would really have been "un jeu qui ne vaut pas la chandelle." That a solitary gazelle *was* seen for some years alive, at the bottom of that abyss, is an undeniable fact, for hundreds of people bear witness to this, among them some Europeans of undoubted veracity; but how it got there, and what became of it, nobody seems to know."

As to the origin or character of that remarkable depression of the earth's surface my friend, Abdallah, seemed to be as ignorant as the rest of his countrymen, for, although he evidently considered the yawning abyss to be of no ordinary formation, he accounted for its existence by relating to me some melancholy Arabian love story, which ended by the cruel murder of the lovers by some jealous villian, and the instantaneous engulfment of all the actors in the drama, together with the scene of the murder in the bowels of the earth. I am satisfied that this circular chasm is neither more nor less than the mouth or crater of some antediluvian or pre-historic volcano.

By the time that we had concluded our inspection

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of that remarkable place, the caravan, which had steadily continued its march without stopping, was just disappearing behind a low hill about a mile ahead of us, and we dashed after and soon overtook it. During the course of that morning we met a camel-caravan coming from Iskanderoon, by which name the little town and seaport of Alexandretta is known to the natives of that region. The caravan proceeded very slowly, every camel being heavily laden with European merchandise, chiefly dry goods packed in boxes and bales and lashed to the strong pack-saddles of these indispensable beasts of burden of the Orient. One extra large and powerful camel jogged slowly in the rear of the caravan, carrying, firmly lashed to the right side of the saddle, a huge box the size and shape of which clearly betrayed that it contained a full-sized square piano, the prodigious weight of which was counterbalanced by a pile of personal luggage, such as ladies' trunks, carpet bags, hat-boxes, etc., so that the aggregate weight on that poor camel's back could not have been less than half a ton.

The heat of the day became intense towards noon and the whitish glare of the parched and desolate country all round us was absolutely hurtful to the eyes. Shortly after noon we descended the rugged side of a low hill into a shallow valley, through the centre of which a small stream of crystal pure water glided, irrigating the sole vegetation which we had seen since we left Aleppo, except the few shrubs noticeable in the chasm. On the left of the road, close to the spot where it crossed the stream, was a small abandoned orchard of about two acres in extent, surrounded by a dilapidated stone wall, and in the crumbling walls were discernible the ruins of former dwellings, one of which still bears traces of having been a palatial residence, judging by

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the remnants of beautiful arabesques in fresco yet to be seen on its façade. This lonely orchard, so near the road, with plenty of fresh water, and its dense canopy of luxuriant fruit and shade trees, its cosy groves, its soft green carpet of fragrant grass, studded with bushes and flowers, is a God-send both to man and beast in that locality so isolated by the fearfully arid and desolate country all round. It is, therefore, invariably made a halting place by the weary travellers over that road, and our caravan was no exception. We stopped there for two hours, unloading our beasts of burden and allowing them to browse on the luxuriant verdure of the grove, while our stallions were picketed and got their regular rations of barley. Camp fires were soon smoking, and delicious coffee—the beverage "par excellence" of those regions—passed around, together with such edibles as could be promptly disposed of. Immediately after partaking of this frugal meal, I took a stroll through the grove, which I found studded with almond, fig, orange, lemon and other fruit trees; but most of them showed the inroads of visitors.

While strolling through the ruins of the buildings, I started two cats, which—though unmistakeably of the domesticated species—were quite wild and darted off with amazing speed on my approach. They had evidently been left behind by the people who last lived there, and, according to their nature, were loth to quit what had been their home, though abandoned by man for years.

About three o'clock of the afternoon we resumed our journey, and, after an extremely tedious march, the latter part over a broad hill studded everywhere with huge boulders, and sharply pointed rocks projecting in every direction from under the scanty soil, leaving a zig-zag path scarcely twelve inches wide, dreadfully

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difficult, tiresome and dangerous to travel. About nightfall we reached the miserable hamlet of "Termanin," situated on the brink of a broad valley, through the bottom of which the river Afrin, the chief tributary of a large but shallow lake called "Ak Deniz," flows.

The five or six miserable stone hovels constituting the wretched hamlet were so small that, "nolens volens," we found ourselves compelled to camp in an open courtyard, about fifty feet square, the only piece of level ground within sight. In order to get the whole of our caravan into that small area of ground, we were obliged first to clear it of its legitimate occupants—a herd of donkeys and goats. We picketed our animals as closely together as possible, partook of a frugal supper, and then stretched full length on the bare ground for the night, wrapped up in blankets, for the dew was heavy and the air chilly. Toward midnight the dew changed into a cold drizzling rain, compelling us to pitch our tent, which we had not used for weeks. The night was pitch-dark; the rain, which rapidly increased, had extinguished the embers of our camp-fire, and we had to grope in the dark so long for our tent pegs and hammer that we became drenched to the skin before completing the erection of the tent. As many of us as the tent would hold crawled under the sheltering canvas and laid down to sleep in wet clothes. But we were not destined to enjoy this questionable luxury long, for in less than two hours after retiring for the second time, a boisterous wind sprung up, and as the soil of the entire area of the courtyard was a mere conglomeration of cattle manure and earth rendered disagreeably soft by the pelting rain, the pegs gave way, and, much to our dismay, the cold dripping-wet tent came down upon us, all in a heap. Discovering that most of our men had taken refuge in one of the wretched

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hovels, the rickety door of which they had burst open without asking permission of the inmates, we joined them, awaiting the daylight, shivering with cold and listening gloomily to the howling of the wind and the patter of the rain, to the crowing of the chanticleers of the hamlet and the hideous braying of the dispossessed donkeys.

Yoossooff, our chief groom, noticing that it was always the same donkey which led the chorus, determined to put a "brake" on that fellow, went to him and tied a five pound weight stone to his tail, thereby effectually stopping his music for that morning, and, strange to say, the other artists, deprived of their leader, kept quiet also. Bedouins employ the same means to prevent their horses from neighing.

The night spent at Termanin was about the most wretched we had spent during our whole journey, and you may readily imagine how gladly we hailed the first glimpse of daylight.

By this time the rain had ceased falling, and the storm had completely abated; but everything was saturated and man and beast were shivering with the cold. A dense fog crept lazily through the valley, and gave the bleak landscape a still more dismal appearance. It was with difficulty and imperturbable patience that the cook could start a camp-fire with the wet fuel at his command, and prepare our breakfast. The rising sun cheered us up, dispersed the fog, and warned us to be stirring. Our beasts of burden, always heavily laden, were almost unable to carry the wet luggage, when it was lashed to their pack-saddles that morning, and the prospect of a whole day's ride on a soaking-wet saddle, over a wretched road, was far from pleasant to anticipate; but we had to put up with it, and we left about eight o'clock in the morning, proceeding in a west,

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northwesterly direction cautiously down hill, toward the valley of the Afrin, which river we crossed on a bridge, one of those rare commodities to be met with in the Turkish Dominions east of the Mediterranean Sea.

Ascending a rugged hill, after crossing this river, we reached a sort of tableland, which we traversed, and then cautiously descended the rough road into the extensive plain of Antioch. This fertile, grassy basin is nearly circular in shape, between fifteen and twenty miles in diameter, and surrounded on all sides by steep, rugged hills, or low mountains. A lake, called by the natives "Ak Deniz," occupies the centre of this huge basin, and receives the waters of five or six small rivers: namely, those of the Kara Su (Turkish, Black River, or Black water) on the north, those of the Afrin on the east, and those of two or three minor streams on the south. Its surplus waters find an outlet on the western border of the lake, and running due south, join after a nearly straight course of about six miles, the Nahr-el-Asy, better known by its ancient name "Orontes," a few miles above the ancient and famous city of Antioch, which not many years ago was shaken almost out of existence by a terrible earthquake, destroying not only the venerable city, but nearly one-third of its population. The borders of Ak Deniz, which name is, strange to say, given by the Turks to the Mediterranean Sea also, are extremely low and marshy; in fact, they appear in many places to be on a level with the surface of the water, edged with a broad belt of tall reed-grass, the elysium of myriads of frogs, eels, snakes, turtles, and of clouds of lively mosquitoes. Though evidently very shallow for its size, the lake is said to be alive with fish, and while travelling along its shores, we saw several large specimens dart high out of the

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silvery water, and fall back again to their native element with a loud splash.

The plain around the lake offers a rich and inexhaustible pasture ground, and thousands of camels, horses, cattle, sheep and goats can be seen grazing all the year on the green though treeless sward, the entire wealth of the inhabitants of a few hamlets and several Bedouin camps scattered here and there, which, with the flat-roofed hovels of the former, and the sombre dark-brown and black woolen tents of the latter, swarming with human beings in Bedouin garb, give the plain of Antioch a very Oriental aspect, and remind the beholder of the patriarchal life depicted in the book of Genesis. Even to this day, the people on the banks of this lake seem to care as little about fish or establishing communication with each other by water as did Abraham, or any of the patriachs subsequent to Noah, who himself only ventured upon the water in preference to remaining under it. Not a fish is caught or eaten by anybody living around the Ak Deniz; and not a boat, or even a raft, is seen anywhere on the lake, which is fully five miles wide, and being almost quadrangular in shape, must be at least twenty miles in circumference; but rather than venture upon its placid waters, if they have to go to the opposite side of the lake, they travel all round it. This peculiar aversion to water and its inhabitants is noticeable among all Arabs except those living on the seacoast, who are sailors and fishermen, as bold and skilful as any in the world, and live principally on fish. Leisurely jogging along the eastern border of the lake in the oppressive heat of the noonday sun, we reached a spot where a powerful, hot, sulphurous spring issues from a crevice in the rock, at the base of a low, rough hill, not more than ten yards to the right of our track, just about half way between the

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two hamlets of Termanin and Aïn-el-Beda, or "Aïn-el-Boyda" (the latter name probably alluding to this spring, as the Arabic "Aïn" means a spring, and "Boyda," eggs), and whoever tasted the water of this spring will readily admit that it reminds one very much of hard-boiled eggs. Our beasts of burden, staggering under the weight of the still damp luggage, showed signs of great weariness. Noticing a brooklet of crystal pure water in the immediate vicinity of the sulphurous spring, we concluded to make a short halt there and then, as the only spot within eyesight where we might find shade was a low quadrangular stone structure, with a flat roof, about thirty feet long by eighteen broad, erected just opposite, and about sixty feet from the spot where the hot spring steamed out of the rock.

No sooner had we dismounted and picketed our horses, when Signor P. and I, accompanied by Abdallah, went to explore the building from which we had heard the sound of human voices. Entering through a low, narrow doorway, we found ourselves in a plain, gloomy and very damp apartment covering almost the whole area of the building. A few steps from the door, a quadrangular basin of solid masonry lay at our feet, measuring about twenty feet in length, and twelve in width, and about six in depth. There were about four feet of water in this public bath-tub, and about a dozen men, women and children, the males entirely nude, and the females clad in long, loose skirts, were splashing about in high glee, in the tepid element. The moment they saw us, their gambols came to an end, and hippopotami-like, they all vanished up to their nostrils in the water gazing at us as silently and immovably as frogs in a pond. I have always observed, during my travels in the east, that the unexpected appear-

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ance of a European or American, among a number of these denizens of the Orient, has invariably a kind of perplexing, embarrassing effect upon them; for no matter how bold or vivacious their dispositions, they always seemed to be suddenly stricken with bashful awkwardness, stupid reserve, and almost complete oral paralysis in the presence of the travellers.

Aware of this peculiarity, and unwilling to prolong their discomfort, we quickly withdrew without speaking to them, and proceeded directly to the orifice in the rock, from which the spring gushes, wrapt in a cloud of steam. To our surprise we found water issuing scalding hot, and perfectly transparent, although of a slightly bluish tint, when examined in a glass tumbler. It possesses a very strong sulphurous taste, stronger than that of any other spring of the kind I knew of. The water, either on account of its high temperature, or its strong taste and odor, seemed to blast all vegetation in its immediate vicinity; for not a shrub or blade of grass grows along its course, and a bluish gray sediment covers the stones and sands over which it flows. Like other sulphurous springs, however, it appears to possess great medical properties, for though hardly known as yet beyond the limits of Syria, the untutored natives, and the other inhabitants of that region, are fully aware of its value. Thousands of Syrians, afflicted with leprosy, that bane of the Orient, and other cutaneous diseases, flock annually to "the healing spring of Aïn el Beda," and are said to return to their homes generally restored to health. The spring and unassuming bath house already described are evidently the property of the government, and given by the latter for the free use of the people, so that the poorest of lepers can enjoy its benefits as long as he chooses. If this were not the case, I longed to take a

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bath myself in that Syrian "Bethesda," to try the effect of the sulphurous water on my own body; but to take a bath at the source of the spring where the water was, of course, the purest, would have been simply suicide by boiling. To dive recklessly into the universal both tub lower down, where I knew that the leprous Syrians shed their skin, and drowned their vermin, was altogether beyond my heroism, and I concluded to defer this delightful recreation until I should be able to indulge it on the not distant shores of the Mediterranean. The existence of this spring within twenty-five miles of the remarkable circular chasm, situated between Aleppo and Termanin, fully established in my mind its character.

After nearly two hours' rest, we resumed our march around the northeastern portion of the lake, meeting occasionally a caravan bound for Aleppo, or a small troop of Bedouin horsemen armed with their traditional long lances, sometimes meeting also a few peasants of both sexes mounted on diminutive donkeys, following some of their stray cattle for which they had been searching, and were contentedly driving home to their hamlets.

The sun by this time shone obliquely upon the broad silvery water at our left, and the dazzling glare of the latter was exceedingly painful to the eyes. Large numbers of wild ducks, geese, and other water fowls rose from the water and passed and re-passed over the lake in every direction, only to settle down again upon the placid water or among the tall reeds, a broad belt of which borders the lake, and is the favorite haunt of thousands of herons, cranes and bitterns.

On the mud banks, projecting here and there from the shore into the lake, stood rows of long legged flamingoes poised on one leg with an air of

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deep meditation, and storks gazing intently into the water as if admiring their own images, as they were faithfully reflected in the silvery mirror before them. Through the shallow water the glossy and "sacred Ibis" stalked cautiously, while the light and nimble jacana, with widely spread toes, promenaded gracefully upon the broad green leaves of the water lily; and high above all gyrated, slowly and majestically, the bold white-headed eagle, which occasionally darted down with lightning swiftness, to the surface of the lake, rising again with a piercing cry of exultation with its prey, a writhing fish firmly clasped by its formidable talons. We travelled for several hours at a leisurely pace over the smooth and level plain, covered with a rich carpet of grass studded here and there with clusters of flowers and low bushes in full blossom. Myriads of brilliant butterflies fluttered in every direction over the beautiful plain, while the constant hum of the honey-bees and the buzz of the humble-bees and beetles, the monotonous chirp of the cricket and grass-hopper around us, and the distant croaking of frogs among the bulrushes of the lake effectually prevented all conversation; yet we all enjoyed this part of the journey so much that on turning around the base of a hill which projected far into the plain and sighting the miserable hamlet of Aïn-el-Beda, where we were to camp for the night, we felt really sorry that we were so near the end of that day's journey; a feeling that we had not experienced since we left the "city of the Caliphs."

Twenty minutes after we rounded the base of the hill our caravan entered the hamlet amidst the furious barking of numerous curs. This miserable way station is situated at the southwestern base of a low, rugged hill, and is composed of three or four strange looking

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massive stone building which seem to be uninhabited, and about a half a dozen of low, wretched thatched huts. The former are two stories high, square built and flat roofed and higher than they are broad. Each is provided with a small, though strong, door and a few small, square window openings, and is of excessively bleak and gloomy appearance, as if haunted. The huts are miserable structures of stone about twenty feet long by ten feet deep; the walls scarcely three feet high, but covered with sloping roofs, composed of a wooden frame well thatched with reed-grass and reaching nearly to the ground.

The interior of these hovels is very dark, being lighted only by the scanty day light which is admitted through one or two apertures in the side walls, not more than fourteen inches square, which together with the low and narrow doorway through which a full-grown person has to crawl on hands and knees, serve the double purpose of ventilators and windows. None of these wretched human dwellings exceed seven feet in height to the top of the roof, so that a full-grown person can stand erect only in the center of the hut. Yet, miserable as the accomodations of those hovels were, even these modest comforts were not within our reach that evening, for on our arrival we found the little hamlet crowded with people, both natives and foreigners, who had already secured and taken possession of all hired quarters for the night. Aïn-el-Beda, being a relay station where the Turkish courier changes his horses, is situated just twenty miles (one day's journey by caravan) from the seaport of Iskanderoon, or Alexandretta, and about the same distance Termanin. The latter being about twenty miles from Aleppo is naturally made a halting place by nearly all the travellers on the road.

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The crowd we found in temporary possession of Aïn-el-Beda was heterogeneous in an eminent degree. There were very unmilitary looking Turkish officers and soliders on their way to the different garrison towns of the interior; there were sharp featured Greeks, evidently merchants, judging from the large bundles and boxes piled up in their vicinity, which they all appeared to watch with nervous care. There were burly, slovenly, hard looking Dalmatians and Montenegrins with huge bristly moustaches and a look of ferocity about them, which indicated perfect willingness to stab on the slightest provocation. There were several Nubians, with complexions not merely black, but literally jet black, evidently slaves of the Turkish officers, for they wore Turkish uniforms and obeyed the orders of the officers.

Beside these, there were Italians, Maltese, Syrian Jews, Armenians, Koods, Arabs and Persians, and even an Englishman, with the characteristic Dundreary whiskers and eyeglass, in full travelling rig, and with an Indian "Solar Topee" (helmet shaped felt or cork hat) on his cranium. He was accompanied by two ladies, one young and handsome; the other probably her mother.

The two latter were evidenty greatly fatigued from their first day's rough riding in Syria, and nothing but the startling news communicated to them by their protector could induce them to crawl for a moment from under the sheltering roof of the hut they occupied, to satisfy their curiosity. A Frenchman, dressed in the height of fashion and sporting an immaculate Panama hat, with a white muslin scarf tied turban-fashion around it, was also in the motley crowd bound for Aleppo. Poor fellow! he was in agonies, for unaccustomed to the climate of Syria, and

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rather corpulent in person, the perspiration oozed out of every pore while he was nervously fanning his wife, with a newspaper, a young and pretty lady, but very delicate, and of deathlike paleness, looking as if she were about to expire upon the trunk on which she sat. Fortunately she was traveling in a "dachterwan," the kind of palanquin forming part of the outfit of the caravan of Count de B.

But for that I doubt if the poor lady would have endured even the first day's journey. In the absence of any available hut for us, we concluded to picket our horses, and beasts of burden, in a circle on the only level piece of ground in the place; which happened to be just in front of the hut secured by the Frenchman, and as we were suspicious of sneak thieves in so miscellaneous a crowd, the greater part of which had, like ourselves, to camp in open air, we piled our luggage and spread our beds right in the center of the circle of pickets.

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XXXI.

NEARING THE GOAL.

Watchmen—Chamber of Torture—Missing Property—Kara Su—The Picturesque Canyon—Mediterranean in the Distance—The Narrow Pass—Passing Under an Overleaping Stream—Healthy Beilan—Private Khan—A Ramble through the Street—"Turning In."

It was near sunset when we arrived at the hamlet, and by the time we had completed our camp arrangements night had set in, and a heavy dew began to fall which drove to tents those of the weary travellers who had secured shelter under the thatched roofs of the huts.

Those who had to camp out around the smouldering camp-fires, lighted here and there, wrapped themselves up from head to foot in blankets, mantles, carpets, tarpaulins, or anything else they could get hold of, and took for pillows anything they could lay their hands on, such as a bag, box, saddle-bag or saddle, and then immediately fell asleep.

Of course each group had, like ourselves, taken the precaution to pile up the luggage and picket the horses and beasts of burden in the immediate vicinity of their respective camp-fires, and, as every adult male traveller was more or less armed, each was expected and supposed to take his turn in watching the property of the group to which he belonged, while his companions slept. An hour after nightfall, the hamlet of Aïn-el-Beda was wrapped in deep silence, and the only sound to be heard was the incessant, dismal croaking of the frogs in the distant marshes, the snore of a drowsy sleeper, the stamp of a horse's foot, or the gurgling sound produced by one of the watchmen smoking his "hoboboble" to keep himself awake, and an occasional equine snort or cough.

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A fresh, though gentle breeze sprang up soon after nightfall in the direction of the lake, distant about a mile to the southwest of the hamlet; and wafted clouds of savage mosquitos from the marshes towards our camp, to the great discomfort of man and beast. Though provided with a good tent, the chief of our caravan purposely abstained from putting it into requisition that evening, merely to save the time and trouble of unpacking, pitching, striking and repacking it; and we were therefore fully exposed to the heavy dew that was falling, and to the ferocious attacks of our winged tormentors.

The former did not inconvenience us much, but the latter grew absolutely intolerable, as they actually insinuated their proboscis through everything less compact than jackboots. Disgusted with this insect-pest, I got up and joined my companion, Signor P., whom I, found seated on a camp stool close to the fire, conversing with two persons muffled in shawls and blankets from their head to foot. The latter proved to be the Frenchman and his delicate wife, who unaccustomed to the inconveniences of Oriental travelling, and unable longer to endure their torment had taken refuge near our camp-fire, which we studiously kept ablaze all night.

As may readily be supposed, the mosquitos found their way into the huts also, and as is well known, preferring the close atmosphere of a room to a cool breeze, they collected in immense numbers in the low hovels, and unmercifully persecuted the drowsy inmates.

We wondered how long the Englishman and his two proteges (who by the way occupied a hut next to that of the Frenchman) would hold out, and we momentarily expected them to dash from under the tottering thatch roof of their "chamber of torture," but to

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our surprise they clung with true British tenacity to their ground; but lo! when the trio made their appearance early on the following morning they looked like convalescents from the small-pox, and so did most of those who attempted to sleep indoors, while those compelled to spend the night outside were comparatively unharmed.

Long before the first streak of day appeared on the eastern horizon, some of the muffled figures prostrate on the ground arose, spectre-like one by one. These were saïs, mukāries, and cooks, or such of the travellers as voluntereed to make a cup of coffee, or prepare a frugal breakfast for their hungry and shivering companions, who rose to their feet slowly, and yawning and stretching their benumbed limbs, staggered about the camp, some aiming for the smouldering camp-fires, others with eyes still half closed with sleep, cruising about in search of misplaced and missing traps, some of them however searching in vain; and the disappearance of various articles of value was conclusive proof that there were thieves among the numbers forming the various groups. There is no one here authorized to search the person or baggage of any individual suspected to be the thief, and if such individual should object to being searched, there is no alternative left to the party despoiled, but to take the matter into his own hands and search by main force the property, etc., of the suspected party, at the risk of stirring up a hornet's nest and getting into a fight, or if he be loth to run such a risk to bear his loss as best he can.

Already, an hour before sunrise the exodus of this motley crowd of travellers began, mounted on emaciated, weak-kneed, worn out pack horses, mules and donkeys, not (as is customary in the Orient, when travelling over unsafe ground) in one large caravan, but in little bands

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of from three to fifteen persons. The last to leave us were the Frenchman and the Englishman, with their respective companions and their two interpreters, two cooks, and quite a host of mukäries, the latter hired to convey the rather voluminous luggage of the august "Feringhies" (Arabic term for Franks or Europeans) to the capital of northern Syria.

As soon as they were gone we hastened our departure and set out hardly twenty minutes later, though in an opposite direction. The glorious sun was rising majestically over the hills which form the eastern boundary of the beautiful plain of Antioch, as we marched out of the hamlet of Aïn-el-Beda, as if to congratulate us that we were within two days journey of the hospitable shores of the Mediterranean Sea. Proceeding in a westerly direction across the plain we reached "Kara Sû" about an hour before noon. This river originates in the mountain gorges of the eastern slope of "Guzel Dagh," the northern branch of the mountain chain bordering the right shore of the Bay of Alexandretta; the southern portion being known as "Djeble Tolos," whose westerly end projects far into the sea, forming a bold and precipitous promontory, closely resembling a pig's back, "Râs-el-Chanzeer," (Arabic) "cape of the pig." As the population of that district is about equally composed of people of Turkish and Arabian descent, and speak both languages equally well, it happens that some of the towns, mountains, rivers, etc., etc., bear Turkish names, while others in their immediate vicinity are known only by Arabic names.

About an hour after crossing the Kara Sû, we reached the hamlet of Bagras, which stands on the junction of the road to Antioch with that to Aleppo, and here our caravan entered the narrow, deep and

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winding canyon which intersects the two already mentioned mountain ranges, Gerzel Dagh and Djebl Tolos, and through which the road (if such a steep rugged mountain path can be called so) leads in a northwesterly direction. Advancing cautiously in Indian file, there being no room for two horses to walk abreast, we slowly ascended the steep grade, in an excessively oppressive atmosphere; but it was permeated with the most delicious odors emanating from sweet scented blossoms of thousands of jessamine, oleander and other semi-tropical plants, which grew thickly on both sides of our path.

We finally reached the apex of the mountain pass, and as each member of the caravan arrived on the summit of the defile, an involuntary exclamation of rapture and surprise escaped his parched lips, and even the panting horses and jaded mules, with their limbs quivering from exhaustion, pricked up their ears at the welcome sight before us. Exclamations, such as "Thank God!" "At last!" freely mingled with the calm, though not less earnest utterance of "El Bahri! Mashallah!" "The sea! God be praised," by twenty hoarse Arab voices; for right at our feet, as it were, the magnificent sheet of water known as the Mediterranean lay in beautiful azure, and extended far, far away to the western horizon, sparsely sprinkled with snow white sails, all apparently motionless, a dead calm seeming to reign over the watery mirror, for not even along the entire length of the rock bound shore, deep below us, could we notice the slightest ripple.

Right at our feet lay the little, though important, seaport of Iskanderoon, or Alexandretta, the principal port on the gulf of that name. It is surrounded in the rear by a belt of swamp or marsh land, covered with a luxuriant growth of wild date trees and bushes, while

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a short distance off the low sandy beach eight sailing vessels quietly rode at anchor. Far away towards the north stretched the beautiful bay that gave the name to this town and seaport, encircled by rolling hills and lofty, rugged mountain peaks, most of the former well covered with timber and underwood. Towards the south that high, steep, and imposing mountain chain, known as Djebl Tolos, projected far into the sea, and ended abruptly in the bold promontory already mentioned and described as Râs-el-chanzeer.

Columbus could not hail the dim outlines of the island of San Salvador more joyously than we, the European members of our caravan, did the sight of the Mediterranean Sea, as it abruptly burst upon us on our arrival at that elevated spot, and I verily believe that that rapturous moment will for ever remain imprinted on our minds as one of the happiest moments of our lives, harbinger as it was of the speedy conclusion of our journey across one of the most arid, monotonous and desolate regions of the globe, although, according to history, the cradle of mankind. With a sigh of intense relief we descended the declivitous slope towards the sea, meeting, much to our dismay, in the narrowest part of the mountain-pass, a long string of camels slowly jogging up hill, in Indian file, every one of them carrying some monstrous box or bale of European dry goods or other merchandise, securely lashed to each side of his pack-saddle, grating against and even running foul of the rocks projecting along their line of march.

It was almost impossible for any one on horseback to pass one of these "ships of the desert," as the Bedouins delight to call these cumbersome creatures, without being either crushed to a jelly, or pushed into the abyss, the point to which I allude being bounded on one side by a high perpendicular wall, and in some

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places by overhanging cliffs, and on the other by a yawning abyss. It was due solely to the presence of mind of the leader of our caravan that we were saved from inevitable destruction, for on the approach of the caravan, he applied without mercy the loaded handle of his whip to the nose of the first camel compelling it and its followers to take the outside track.

I hardly dared to look behind me, expecting nothing else but to see one camel after the other tumble into the gulf at their side; but to my intense relief, every one of these wonderfully sure-footed animals managed to pass us all right, and the two caravans went by each other on a path scarcely five feet wide, without a scratch; but what still more surprised me was the coolness and equanimity of the camel-drivers, who did not manifest the least discomposure or anxiety in their perilous, situation, being evidently accustomed to such contingencies. A short time after passing the caravan, on turning a curve in the steep mountain path around one of the towering cliffs, we caught sight on our left of the houses which form the uppermost portion of the small town of "Beilan," our next halting place. Upon our further descent of about a quarter of a mile, we passed several cataracts of prodigious height, but of insignificant volume of water, leaping, foaming, and seething from cliff to cliff, from far above our heads, and disappearing from view through a precipitous natural sewer, or tunnel, opening between the towering rock and the path; one only of these cataracts leaps from a high overhanging cliff clear over the path into the gloomy abyss below, and not a drop falls upon the path, although this volume of water expands in its descent to its utmost capacity, and resembling a gigantic veil of crystal, reflecting all the colors of the

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rainbow, like a prism of glass, whenever the sun throws his rays upon it, most charming to behold.

Through the bottom of the chasm below thundered a mountain stream of considerable size, which originated near the summit of the northeastern slope of Djebl Tolos, and leaping from rock to rock, spraying, seething and foaming in an endless number of cataracts, and finally pours its turbulent waters into the Mediterranean, or, more correctly expressed, into the Gulf of Iskanderoon, two miles southwest of the port of the same name.

As if to render the wild scenery of the mountain gorge still more grandly romantic, Dame Nature has thought fit to provide both sides of the gorge with niches, dark crevices and spacious caverns, some high up in the rocks and utterly inaccessible, except to birds, for whom they are safe roosting and breeding places, especially of the numerous white-headed eagles, falcons and hawks, which gyrate all day long over the gloomy chasm, and chasing each other through space, fill the air with their hideous, piercing screams, which echo dismally through the canyon.

The wildest scenery of the Alps or of the Rocky Mountains cannot surpass that locality in wildly romantic weirdness, and no scenic painter could possibly find a spot more fit to furnish the wolf's den in Weber's famous opera.

No sooner had we passed the last of this series of cataracts than we found ourselves upon the threshold of "Beilan," descending into the heart of the town, through the upper end of the narrow, crowded bazaar, amid the loud jingling of the bells of our pack-mules and "gheddishes," the neighing of horses, the howling of the street curs, and the vociferous shouting and yelling of the usual crowd of young ragamuffins, who

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habitually prowl about the bazaars of the Orient, and who always hail the arrival of a caravan with delight, generally because of their prospect of pilfering, and obtaining "bakshish" (alms or small present of money), these prospects being brighter when there are Feringhies (Franks or Europeans) with the caravan.

Though it was still early in the evening, the entire bazaar was wrapt in the dim twilight of the approaching night, by reason of the tattered, dark-colored awnings of coarse woolen tent cloth; and the sun-burnt and weather-beaten straw mats, which hung over the entire length of the bazaar, suspended between the two rows of old, rickety, worm-eaten wooden stalls and booths, on both sides of the narrow thoroughfare, which effectually succeeded in excluding not only sunshine, but also daylight and fresh air from the filthy, sultry bazaar.

It was only with difficulty and the exercise of extreme caution that our horses and mules felt their way over the outrageously uneaven, slippery pavement, downwards to the khan or caravansary, where, at the suggestion of Abdallah, our Arab traveling companion from Aleppo, we were to spend the night. Guided by the latter, we soon brought up before the building designated; but a hasty inspection of the premises revealed to us the fact that the place was too filthy and damp to receive a decent caravan; moreover, it was occupied by a dying camel, apparently abandoned, and but for the risk of having to pay for the animal, or creating a disturbance, we would gladly have ended its misery with a pistol.

Under these circumstances we were not willing to occupy the khan, even for a single night, and went in search of more suitable quarters, which we found a short distance below. It was a large, square stone building

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standing on the right, and about thirty yards off the main street, which is the thoroughfare on which the bazaar is located. Like the first mentioned kahn, this structure was two stories high, resting on a ground floor, cellar or basement of the whole area of the building. This floor lay about four feet below the level of the ground, while the vaulted ceiling was supported by two rows of stout, cylindrical, stone pillars about eight feet high. Admittance to this semi-subterranean vault was gained by descending a sloping plane, about six feet wide, in front of the entrance.

Only the ground floors of these buildings are used as caravansaries, and every caravan entering a private kahn has, of course, to pay the "khanjee," *i. e.*, the proprietor or man in charge of the khan, who usually lives with his family on one of the upper floors, a certain sum for the privilege of using the ground floor.

The consideration is optional with the kahnjee, the usual demand being from twenty to twenty-five piasters, *i. e.*, ninety cents to one dollar twelve and a half cents gold, for a day or night of twelve hours, for the whole caravan. Europeans have generally to pay more, especially if the khanjee considers that they are fit subjects to be fleeced.

Public khans belonging to and established for this purpose by the Turkish government are free to all, but being, for this very reason, the refuge of the poorest and most slovenly of travelers and vagabonds, are generally found to be so filthy and so full of vermin, that no decent traveler will enter them if he can help it.

Our caravan was soon snugly quartered in the spacious kahn, as comfortably as circumstances would permit; moreover none of us were, after so tedious a journey, any longer over fastidious. A sumptuous meal was promptly prepared and consumed, and the tired

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animals also properly cared for. Night had set in by the time that dinner was over, but it was a magnificent moonlight night, almost as bright as daylight, for which the Orient has ever been famous.

After supper Abdallah proposed to the chief of the caravan a ramble through the town, which was promptly accepted. We found Beilan, or Beylan to be a place of about five thousand inhabitants, chiefly Moslems, with a few hundred Jews and Armenian Christians among them. The greater part of the male population is engaged in traffic, and in conveying merchandise and travelers across the mountain pass, to and from the port of Iskanderoon, by means of camels, pack-horses, mules and donkeys. The balance of the population is occupied in manufacturing cotton, woolen or silk goods, leather goods and hardware; and in raising sheep, goats and poultry. Some of the merchants of Beilan are reputed to be wealthy; and the majority of the population of the place seem to dwell in comfort and ease in spite of their slovenly dress and appearance, and the undeniable squalor of the town. Their generally healthy looks and vivacious happy temper are, however, solely due to the remarkably salubrious climate, and the excellence of the water of their mountain home situated as it is, not less than sixteen hundred feet above the sea, and constantly exposed to the delicious invigorating breezes that waft across the beautiful bay of Iscanderoon.

The town of Beilan is built on both sides of the deep mountain gorge before described; but the principal portion is situated on the right hand side of the gorge on going down the mountain pass, which is also on that side. The principal buildings in this portion of the town are composed chiefly of stone or sun-dried brick, erected in the usual style of Syrian architecture;

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being square or elongated in shape, from one to three stories high, including the ground floor, with flat roofs, vaulted cellars and scanty, iron-barred window openings. The remainder of the buildings on the principal side of the gorge are all built of wood, as are also those on the opposite side. They resemble one and two-storied log houses, decked with large, low, thatched or shingled roofs, the ends of which project far beyond the four sides of the building, which rest on foundation walls of rude masonry, the entire wood-work turned dark brown, indeed, almost black, by the action of the sun and rain. These buildings remind one of the old, weather-beaten châlets one meets everywhere in the canton of Berne, and along the wildly-romantic shores of the "Lake of the four cantons," in Switzerland, and attached, rather than built, to the steep mountain side, like swallows' nests; and because of their contrast to the usual Oriental style of building, from their sombre color, as well as their perilous position, they present an oppressively gloomy and weird appearance.

There is not a new building to be found in the town; indeed, every house looks as if it were a century old, and even the numerous little aqueducts, which carry the water from the basins at the foot of each successive cascade to the various quarters and garden-patches of the town, bear the stamp of antiquity.

The town of Beilan owes its origin and existence to the present day to the mountain pass, which appears to have been known to the ancients as the lower of the two Amanian passes, that are decribed by Cicero as "easy of ascent because of their narrowness."

There seems to be no doubt that this pass figured as an important strategical point in the war between Alexander the Great, and Darius Codomannus, or Darius III, (334–330, B.C.)

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A century ago Beilan is said to have been the secret stronghold, or rather place of refuge, of a notorious pirate, named Kara Yoossooff (Black Joseph), who, surrounded by a gang of desperate cut-throats like himself, kept a good lookout from the window of his residence at Beilan, for becalmed sails appearing on the western horizon, and when he espied one, hastily descended to the shore, accompanied by his desperate crew, where he kept hidden among the cliffs, or in some lonely inlet, screened by forest trees; a fleet "felucca" (a small sailing vessel, provided with lateen sails, and capable of being propelled by from ten to sixteen oars) with which he pounced upon his prey, invariably destroying all evidences of his crime by sinking or burning the craft, with her murdered crew, and then the villain would cruise about until nightfall, when he would land his booty in some hidden nook upon the coast, and retreat by circuitous ways, with his spoils, to his lair at Beilan; and there, with his gang, spend their leisure time in the grossest orgies. The utterly demoralized population, being not only afraid to betray him; but finding it also to their pecuniary interest not to betray the source of their wealth.

The Turkish government, however, got on his scent, and his capture was accomplished. He was finally "officially" starved to death in an iron cage.

In the year 1832, Beilan acquired its latest historical renown, by the battle which was fought between the army of the warlike and ambitious Mehemed Ali, Viceroy of Egypt, and that of Mahmud II, Sultan of the Ottoman Empire, in which the latter was worsted; the Turkish government driven to the brink of ruin, and saved only by the timely interference of the European powers.

When I returned with my two companions, from

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my rambles through the town, it was quite late, and even then were reluctant to "turn in," for the night was lovely, the full moon illuminated the mountain scenery, and the air was so delightfully invigorating, that, although we had been in the saddle since sunrise, we felt stronger and in better spirits than when we set out on the day's journey. To retire to the gloomy recesses of the ground floor of the khan, out of the beautiful moonlight, was exasperating, yet we were obliged to do so in order to keep everything belonging to the caravan under our control, and to be ready in case of any emergency; such as sudden sickness among the men or beasts of burden; or fire, or robbery, for, to be candid, the Beilanese, although no longer known as professional highwaymen and pirates, are said to be still rather afflicted with kleptomania and in bad repute among travelers, as "sneak thieves." Every member of the caravan would undoubtedly have preferred to camp in the open air; but outside of the khan, there was not a level space of ground in the whole town large enough for even a smaller caravan than ours to camp on.

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Lord Lansdowne

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XXXII.

THE END OF OUR JOURNEY.

"Last Night Out"—"Holwah"—The Narrow Descent—The Storm—Through the Gate—Delivering the Stock—Our Genial Greek Merchant—A Night to Remember—Custom House Familiarities—The Mail Steamer—Good-Bye to the Home of Islam.

The night passed over quietly enough, and by sunrise next morning we were busy preparing for our last day's journey through the "Land of the Star and the Crescent." Before leaving, the chief of our caravan had occasion to go to the bazaar to make some purchases, and when he returned he had a good supply of that delicious, genuine Arabic sweetmeat which I described in my account of Muscât as "Holwah," a quantity of which we intended to present to our friends in Europe. Immediately after the return of our chief the caravan set out, and we resumed the perilous descent of the fearfully steep and rugged mountain-pass. When the sun peeped over the rugged mountain peak into the gorge that morning, we noticed its unusual crimson lustre, which in those latitudes indicates an excessively hot day; the slight morning haze which had hung over the landscape up to the advent of the fiery orb dissolved into a kind of humid air, which, wherever the sun penetrated, could be seen to vibrate vividly up and down: a very common phenomenon, to be sure, even in more northern latitudes, but hardly anywhere so annoying to the traveller as in that break-neck defile. Imagine, my reader, that you are to descend steep stairs on horseback, the stairs about ten miles long, varying from ten feet to ten inches in width, leading in zig-zag course partly along the very

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brink of a perpendicular abyss, partly through the stunted forest and thorny underwood of a mountain-slope, the steps of the stairs composed of huge boulders of irregular size and shape, thrown promiscuously together, and a constantly vibrating vapor before your own and your horse's eyes to dazzle you both—you will have a fair idea of the pass of Beilan.

To render matters worse, our caravan was no sooner under way again, than to our dismay we saw that the western horizon was rapidly assuming a dull, leaden hue, the faint breeze dying away and a dead calm reigning on the sea before us, which was plain enough not only from the smooth surface of the water, but by the stationary position of the white sails sprinkled here and there upon the azure sheet spread out before our feet. Huge dark clouds rose one by one from the sea towards the westward horizon, and crowding upon each other with irresistible power, amidst the faint roll of distant thunder, soared straight towards us with giant sweeps.

The winged songsters of the forest relapsed into silence; even the monotonous chirp of the cricket and grasshopper was no longer heard; a suffocating heat permeated the atmosphere; not a rustle of the leaves was heard, not a blade of grass stirred; indeed, the entire vegetable and animal world had suddenly dropped into deathlike silence. Hark! the shrill cry of a falcon! There he darts like an arrow into the mountain gorge, seeking a shelter. A blinding flash of lightning, followed immediately by an appalling peal of thunder, shaking the very rocks down which we were climbing and echoing dismally along the mountains; a few heavy large drops of rain, another flash, another peal; then a perfect deluge of water, accompanied by flash after flash of lightning and peal

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upon peal of thunder, gave us a specimen of the storms of that region and naturally increased the difficulties of our descent to the coast. The deluge lasted for nearly two hours without the slightest interruption. The rainstorm had at least cooled the atmosphere to such a degree that none of us felt very sorry for our drenching.

By the time the rain was over, we had nearly reached the base of the mountain, and the most difficult portion of the pass lay behind us. The road, hitherto a mere rugged path, began to widen there and led us in a due northerly direction across a narrow grassy plain gently sloping towards the sea-shore, to the town and seaport of Alexandretta. This plain, although looking perfectly smooth from a distance, is furrowed by deep gullies, through which during the wet season the water rushes down from the mountains to the sea. Great numbers of worn-out camels, horses and donkeys sent there to recuperate their vital powers, may be seen browsing, in company with herds of goats and sheep, on the scanty herbage and on the foliage of the bushes and thickets which line these periodical water-courses, guarded by half-naked old men, women and children lounging in the shade of solitary trees.

Nearer to the seashore the plain is almost spirit-level, extremely marshy and full of holes of stagnant water, thickly overgrown with bushes, luxurious creepers and water plants; a veritable elysium for reptiles, waterfowl and wild pigs, and the chief cause of the notoriously deleterious climate of that seaport. A roughly constructed dam of unhewn timber, filled-in with unhewn stone, constitutes the road across this marsh, and over it our caravan scrambled upon the low sandhills in the rear of the town which loomed up to view scarcely one hundred yards off. Wading this

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short distance almost knee-deep through quicksand, we reached the narrow dilapidated southern gate and picked our way along the narrow sinuous streets through the usual crowd of gaping loungers to the building in which the office of the agent of our Aleppo friends was located, and where we were piloted by a hâmnâl (public porter) who happened to be acquainted with that gentleman. In due time we brought up before the house in question, and, finding the gentleman in, handed him our letters of introduction, whereupon he immediately placed himself at our service, together with his whole staff of clerks. Having been apprized beforehand by the Aleppo firm, he had secured and prepared the largest and best khan in the town for the exclusive use of our caravan, and conducted us thither after refreshing us with a few glasses of delicious Cyprus wine, the produce—our host asserted—of the famous vineyards of Nikosia, capital of the island of Cyprus. A motly crowd of naked urchins, tattered street beggars, inquisitive loungers of both sexes, and slovenly Turkish sinecure officials followed eagerly in the wake of our caravan till we reached the designated khan, distant about one hundred and fifty yards from the office of our host and about the same from the beach.

It was an unsightly edifice; like most of the buildings in the wretched towns, composed of a very spacious vaulted ground floor of massive masonry, the vault at least fifteen feet above the floor, supported by rows of stout wooden pillars resting on pedestals of masonry. The upper story was constructed entirely of wood, and covered with a huge unsightly roof with gable ends; the edges of the roof projecting so far beyond the four sides of the building as to completely shelter from the sun the rickety wooden verandah or balcony, that ran all ronnd the second story of the building.

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The entire wood-work outside and in, was utterly destitute of paint; and was cracked and dark, almost black from the action of the sun, wind and rain; indeed, man and elements seem to have combined to give the building as gloomy and inhospitable an aspect as possible. This, however, is the general character of the majority of buildings in the Orient, especially of dwelling-houses; and this is why the graceful mosques and minarets so strangely contrast with the other structures of any Mohammedan city and enliven the otherwise sombre aspect of Oriental cities in general. As in most buildings of similar construction in that region, the lower or ground floor of a khan is intended for the accommodation of travelers, or caravans, for horse, mule, donkey or camel stables, or for the storage of the so-called imperishable goods, and coarse merchandise; such as iron, cement, lime, salt, pottery, wood, rags, gall-nuts, dye-woods, goats' hair, sheep's wool, hides, sole leather, oil, etc., while the upper portion of the building is generally arranged for dwelling purposes, offices, or store-rooms for perishable goods and fine merchandise, such as dry-goods, raw and manufactured silk, morocco, leather, arms, hardware, tobacco, drugs, spices, etc.

Gloomy and inhospitable though the khan was, to all appearance, that portion which was designed to receive our caravan was clean, in comparison with scores of other khans between Bagdad and the Mediterranean, which by force of circumstances, had had the honor to receive us during our long journey from Lower Mesopotamia, and it was evident to us that its temporary cleanliness was due solely to the provident care of our host, who had caused the premises to be put in order for our reception. Situated so close to the beach, our quarters had, moreover, the advantage of a thick layer

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of clean dry sand as a floor, which was greatly preferable to the floors of damp black soil, or the manure mixed dust or hard cobblestone pavements usually to be met with in these caravansaries. It was therefore with genuine delight that we took possession of our quarters, and we were soon snugly installed therein, the animals picketed along the walls, our luggage piled in the centre of the hall and two sentinels placed at the entrance, merely in a kind of medical capacity, to suppress the slightest symptoms of an outbreak of kleptomania among the slovenly crowd that beleagured the gate.

Our amiable host, before returning to his office, had, after attending to all our wants, invited Signor P. and the author of this narrative, to spend the evening with him and his friends at his residence in the southern part of the town, and promised to call for us about sunset. As it was late in the afternoon by the time we were fairly installed in the khan, we spent the few hours of daylight left to us in overhauling our trunks containing our crumpled and disordered wardrobe, which was still quite damp from the ducking we got that morning in the mountains. A dive in the placid bay was next taken, and the refreshing bath, a coarse Turkish towel and an aggravatingly dull razor imparted a rosy hue to our bronzed features.

When we got back to the khan we were surprised to find Yoossooff, the cook, applying of his own accord the artistic brush to our boots, as if the poor fellow felt that his faithful services would soon be dispensed with for ever by the two "Feringhies" whom he had followed step by step from the "city of the Caliphs" to the distant shores of the Mediterranean. Towards sunset, our host, accompanied by his three clerks, an Italian, a Greek, and an Armenian, made his appear-

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ance and conducted us to his residence, a medium sized dwelling-house surrounded by a pretty garden. On the spacious piazza sat three ladies fanning themselves, for the air was hot and oppressive, and the mosquitoes quite troublesome. Our host introduced to us the eldest of the trio, a lady of about twenty-two years of age, of comely form and handsome features, as his wife. She was a Greek from the isle of Cyprus, and her husband an Italian. Of the other two ladies, the younger a pretty girl of fifteen, but with a development which would have done honor to a woman of twenty, was the sister of our hostess, and the other slightly her senior, bore the same relation to our host. Unfortunately neither Signor P. or I were familiar with the Greek language, which was all that our hostess and her sisters could speak fluently; but the other members of the party were ready to interpret, though conversation in that way is rather up-hill work.

We sat down to as delightful a repast as the port of Iskanderoon could possibly offer; and the palatable Cyprus wine succeeded wonderfully well in enlivening us, and interpretation was gradully dispensed with, and we were at last able to understand each other. After dinner, delicious coffee (a rare article all through the Orient) and the traditional water-pipe, "narghileh," and "shattab" (long-stemmed tobacco pipe), were served by the servants, while the sister of our host played on the piano the accompaniment of some very melodious Greek ballads which were sung by the sisters. After a while the ladies retired, and our conversation centred on horse-flesh (a favorite topic in those regions). Our host's charger had become disgusted with the trying climate of Iskanderoon, and fled to the equine paradise only a week before our arrival, and as no European

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in the Orient will do without a horse, he proposed to buy mine if I would allow him to give the nag a fair trial the following day, to which I, of course, assented. Although he was a good horseman, the trial resulted more in a test of his ability in that line, than in a trial of my nag's speed and endurance, for he was no sooner in the saddle than he was pitched wrong side up in the sand, which, strange to say, infatuated him so with the gentle creature, that he paid at once the price I asked for him, which was treble what I had paid for him at Mossul. In extenuation, however, I must state, that the horse was well worth the money at Iskanderoon, where horses are scarce, poor, and good ones consequently expensive.

Although only a "gheddish" (low-bred horse), and an ugly one at that, the remarkable animal carried me all the way from Mossul, doing duty as roadster, and hunter, to boot, when game was visible, and I have dashed over many a mile with him after the fleet boars and fleeter gazelles, on the table lands and plains of Mesopotamia and Syria, while we had still a long journey before us; yet, that pony grew fatter every day, in spite of all hard work, so that by the time we reached the Mediterranean, he was as round and sleek as an eel. A more sure-footed, enduring, genuinely gritty horse, I never saw, and I am not ashamed to say that I actually felt that my heart would break when the moment came to part with him. Had I only been bound to Europe instead of distant America, I would not have left him behind.

About midnight our party broke up. The night being very dark, our host invited both Signor P. and myself to remain until morning, and offered the best rooms in the house. Signor P., who had never yet slept a night away from the horses under his charge, politely,

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but positively declined, but as I was more at liberty, I accepted the invitation. Friend P. was therefore escorted to the khan by two servants bearing lanterns, while I was assigned to a neatly furnished room, and being very tired soon fell asleep. I was not destined, however, to enjoy much sleep, for I soon began to feel such a crawling and buzzing about me, that I got up, struck a light, and discovered to my dismay, that the snow white bed was alive with bedbugs, and the room swarming with mosquitoes of the most bloodthirsty kind. To sleep in that chamber of torture was absolutely out of the question. How I cursed my bad luck in not having hit upon some pretext of declining my host's too great hospitality. How I wished myself on the quicksand of the stable, even though sand-fleas abounded, for they are harmless in comparison with famished Syrian bedbugs! and the exposure of the khan to the sea-breeze seemed to justify my belief that it was free from mosquitoes. To be sure I might have jumped out of the window and groped my way through the stygian darkness to the khan, but leaving the house of my host clandestinely, would have been an unpardonable breach of etiquette, which I was reluctant to commit, nor could I well disturb the slumbers of the household by tramping the room all night. No alternative was left me, therefore, but to sit quietly at the open window and await the daybreak as patiently as I might, keeping the mosquitoes off with occasional puffs of smoke.

Almost anything comes to an end, however, sooner or later, and so did my tribulations. Long before sunrise any sleepless member of the family, looking out of the window, might have seen the guest of the house walking about the garden, to all appearance deeply engaged in botanical studies, while in reality he was endeavoring to keep awake and kill time, till the lazy

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Armenian cook could make up his mind to strike the gong in token of breakfast being ready. And strike it he did at last; but although I was young, it did not seem to me that I should live long enough to see my host and hostess among the living. When they finally appeared delicacy would not permit me to tell the entire truth, for when they asked me how I slept, I said "well." And so I had, only not long enough; but when I got back again to the khan I went straight for my blankets, rolled myself in them, and vowed I would not spend another night under that roof.

I slept till Signor P. aroused me at noon, and asked me to accompany him to the bazaar, where he was going to make his purchases of a week's provisions, etc., for our expected voyage by the next mail steamer to Smyrna (Asia Minor). A short ramble through the narrow and filthy thoroughfares led us there. To the traveller coming from the interior, who has seen the immense bazaars of Bagdad, Damascus and Aleppo, stocked with enormous quantities of Asiatic and European merchandise and produce; thronged from sunrise till sunset with a chaos of human beings and domestic animals, and filled from morning till night with the din of thousands of human voices, and the bustle and clatter of an army of tradesmen of every description, the small, poorly stocked and sparsely frequented "sookh," or bazaar, of Iskanderoon, is hardly worth noticing, as it contains little more than is absolutely requisite for the everyday consumption of the small seaport town.

The comparative quiet of that part of any Mohammedan town which is always the busiest is an unerring evidence of commercial and industrial dullness, and the only people engaged in traffic there, in that bazaar, appear to be those who are administering to the wants of the numerous travellers bound for or arriving from the

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interior of the country; and to those of the many camel, horse, mule, and donkey caravans which constitute as yet the only means of communication and conveyance between the seaport and the interior, and the wear and tear of whose equipments across that terrible mountain pass of Beilan, and over those wretched roads in general, is naturally very severe. Though rather dull in a strictly commercial sense, there is no lack of frequenters at the bazaar, or rather the filthy, smoky Turkish coffee-houses, and Greek or Armenian dram-shops, gambling hells, and other establishments of still worse repute located there, and as well as in other quarters of the town.

In the former may be seen congregated, sitting cross legged upon low, broad, upholstered wooden benches, or squatted on little wooden stools, conversing, smoking, sipping thick, black coffee, old blear-eyed, bow-legged Turkish officers of the army and navy, and villainous looking dealers in horses, mules or camels, trying to palm off some worthless animal on an inexperienced customer. Add to these sluggish and slovenly custom-house officers who, instead of watching the arrivals in port, are on terms of "Hail fellow, well met!" with some Greek or Italian smuggler, a couple of wide-awake Maltese, and you will have a fair idea of the company assembling at these places.

These Maltese are genuine specimens of that restless class of natives of the island of Malta who are to be found in every port of the Mediterranean; they are remarkable linguists, possessing the faculty of picking up any language in the world in less than a fortnight, and in consequence of this talent, lounge about those seaports, anxious to be engaged by foreigners in the capacity of "dragoman" (interpreter, guide and courier), and ever ready to start with their employer at

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five minutes' notice, to any part of the habitable globe. The dram shops and other resorts of vice, although to be found in all the larger towns of the interior by a close observer, have the effrontery to show in public, only on the thresholds of civilization, and Iskanderoon makes no exception to the rule; and these dens of iniquity seem to flourish there, being the resorts of the "canaille" of the port, as well as of drunken sailors of Greek, Russian, French, Austrian and Italian nationality; the vessels entering that port chiefly fly the flags of those nations, though there are a few coasters which hail from Tunis, Egypt, Palestine, the Islands of Candia, Rhodes, Cyprus, etc., which sail under Turkish colors and carry mixed crews of Turks, Mongrel Greeks, Arabs and Negroes, who, when on shore and "on a bender," (to use a sailor phrase), eclipse the sea-faring "giaours" downright in bestiality. The population of Iskanderoon, which by the way numbers only from twelve or fifteen hundred persons, is, like all other seaports very mixed as regards nationality, and composed of Turks, Arabs, Persians, Armenian Christians, Syrian Jews, Egyptians, Greeks, Albanians or Arnauts, Montenegrins, Dalmatians, a few Maltese, Italians, and Frenchmen, some of the latter acting as representatives or agents for European mail steamers, which ply regularly along the whole coast between the ports of Alexandria in Egypt, and Smyrna in Asia Minor, calling at the principal intermediate ports, as well as at that of Rhodes, the capital of the island bearing the same name. The houses, with the exception of a few in the immediate vicinity of the port, are small, low, poorly built hovels, of wood, stone, or sun-dried brick. The harbor, however, is the best and safest on the Syrian coast, frequented annually by from five to six hundred sailing vessels, small and of

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medium carrying capacity. On our return from the bazaar to the khan, followed by our whole train of pack-horses and mules, which were required to transport the large stock of provisions, etc., for a week's voyage, aboard the steamer, all our mukkaries were paid off by Signor P. and honorably dismissed with their respective beasts of burden. Each of them made his reverential salaam and quietly departed with his animals for the bazaar, where they all watched for a chance to find return freights for their home (Aleppo). Early in the afternoon of our last day on the Syrian coast, our agent and host visited us at the khan for the ostensible purpose of inviting us to spend the evening with him, but in reality to break to me the welcome news that a case of wearing apparel, books, stationery, and other requisites of European residents in the Orient, had arrived.

This case had been forwarded to my address in Bagdad by my relatives in Switzerland, and had arrived at Iskanderoon nearly eighteen months before my return to that part, and which by reason of the shocking muddle prevalent in Turkish custom-houses in general, and that of Iskanderoon in particular, stuck fast in some way, and had just been discovered and could be obtained by my personal application. For a year I had given up all hope of ever seeing it, and during the whole time of my residence in Mesopotamia, I was obliged to draw whatever was indispensable from Bombay, at ruinously high prices. Indignant though I was, in having the memory of my annoyance revived, I was glad enough after all to rescue my property from the thievish custom-house rabble. On the back of a herculean "Hâmmâl" (Turkish, "porter," or "human camel") the case was brought to our khan, and there the contents were promptly overhauled; but, no words

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can describe their condition. An India rubber overcoat nicely folded, was pasted together so thoroughly, that no human being could undo it. Fine English razors were as rusty as the hoops of a vinegar barrel, and no muscular power on earth could open a pair of new scissors. All the new boots and shoes were green and hairy from mildew, like mouldy cheese; while the moth had eaten through a layer of new woolen suits and undergarments to the depth of two feet. In short, the whole contents of the case were hardly worth the five piasters (22½ cents American money) which I paid the Hâmmâl for conveying the case from the Custom-house to the khan. At the conclusion of my inspection I really felt sorry that the case had not been made away with by the officials.

In return for his friendly attention, Signor P. and myself spent that evening with our agent and host. Hardly had we returned to the khan, and retired to rest, when the boom of two guns discharged at short intervals, vibrated from over the water, and echoed loudly and dismally along the silent shore. We knew this to be the signal of the expected French mail steamer from down the coast, which, as is customary almost everywhere, thus announced her arrival in port.

Congratulating ourselves upon the prospect of a speedy departure from the sickly coast, and wearisome seaport, we bade each other good-night, and were soon asleep. With the first streak of daylight we got up and aroused our men to prepare for our embarkation, which Signor P. was anxious should take place as early in the morning as possible.

The requisite number of strong wooden boxes or stalls furnished by the steamship company for the accommodation of our animals on board the ship, stood already in a row beyond high water mark, on the

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sandy beach, having, at the request of our agent, been brought along from Beyrout by the preceding mail steamer and landed on the beach. About sunrise the barges, or lighters, which rode at anchor in the vicinity of the stalls, drew broadside as close in shore as practicable, and soon afterwards a messenger was sent from the steamer to inform us that the captain was ready to receive us. Ten minutes afterwards we marched with all our horses to the beach, followed by quite a train of sturdy Hâmmâls carrying all our goods and chattels. We found twenty stalls upon the beach, but only nineteen were required, eighteen for the horses, and one for the splendid she-ass "Zobeida," which Bahri had ridden all the way from Bagdad. All the stalls were shipped, however, the supernumerary one to be used in case of accident to one of the others while being hoisted aboard the vessel. A bridge of stout planks established communication between each lighter and the beach. Each craft was capable of loading five stalls, which were placed on deck by the combined strength of our Hâmmâls. Then the horses were blindfolded, and cautiously led over the planks and secured in their respective boxes, the sides of which were carefully padded, to prevent any injury to the horses from chafing against the stall while afloat. Each stall was provided with a strong canvas belt fully one yard wide attached to one side of the stall. When the animal was seasick or sleepy, this belt could be passed under his belly and fastened to the opposite side of the stall so as to support the entire weight of the body, the box being too narrow for a horse to lie down in it. When each lighter had taken its load, Signor P., with five grooms jumped aboard of one, and I, also with five grooms, embarked in the other. Six sturdy oarsmen propelled the cumbersome craft rapidly towards the steamer, the stroke

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of their oars keeping time with a plaintive, monotonous song chanted by the man at the helm, the oarsmen falling in with a chorus at the end of each verse, with an approbative grunt. The horses and men left on the beach were in charge of Abdallah, who had accompanied us to the shore to see us off. The captain of the steamer having been told that the horses were for his Imperial Majesty of France, was on hand, with his officers, to receive us, as we came alongside, and after saluting, issued prompt orders to the crew, to assist in getting the valuable living cargo on board; and as the commander superintended the work in person, and the steamer was provided with the most improved steam hoisting apparatus, all was safely landed on deck in less than an hour. After partaking of some refreshment, Signor P. and I returned in the lighters for the balance of our animals and luggage, leaving the grooms in charge of the horses on the steamer.

Our second load was not so easily shipped, for one of our horses, a vicious brute, though one of the finest of the lot, would not be blind-folded, or take a single step towards the boat until we were finally obliged to gag him and tie his legs in such a manner, that he could not injure anybody, when eight Hâmmâls lifted him up bodily, and carried him on board, and into his stall. Bidding Abdallah good-bye we again set out for the steamer and got everything aboard without accident. No sooner, however, were the gag and ropes taken off, when the stallion sent his stall flying into splinters about our heads and ears, and he was with the utmost difficulty again secured, gagged and fettered and transferred in this condition, into the extra stall. This equine maniac was kept in fetters until we were well at sea, when he became so dreadfully seasick, that he became gentle and harmless as an infant. When all

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was safely arranged on board, Signor P. called all our twenty native servants together, including the cook, and paid them off, explaining to them that their services were no longer required, except those of four "saïs," for the horses, and inquired which of them would accompany us to Franghistân (Europe). They were all eager to go, but Signor P. selected Yoossooff el Yezzidee the chief groom, Mohammed, Ali and Achmed, the four best saïs among them; they all seemed overjoyed by the prospect of visiting the country of the Nazrâni (Christians) while the others looked downright dejected, especially Yoossooff the cook, who sobbed from genuine grief, but an extra bakshish from our purses partially restored his composure.

One could readily see by their sorrowful mien how hard it was for the poor fellows to part with us. They tarried on board until the boatmen who were being paid off by Signor P., informed them that the boats were going to the shore at once, whereupon each of them made his most reverential salāam to Signor P., myself, and the girl Bahri, and grasping the right hand of each of us, imprinted a humble kiss thereon, and mournfully descended the vessel's side into the lighters, keeping their eyes fixed on the steamer until they landed on the beach where they remained awhile, and then gradually disappeared among the houses. During the remainder of the forenoon the steamer took in coal, and in the afternoon, several lighters with passengers, chiefly Turks, Greeks and Armenians, and a considerable quantity of Persian, Syrian, and Mesopotamian merchandise and produce came alongside and transferred their passengers and cargo to the steamer. The latter consisted of carpets, rugs, raw silks, camels' hair, goats' hair, sheep's wool, tobacco, gall-nuts, pistachios, almonds, dates, etc., in boxes, bags and mats. Towards

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four o'clock in the afternoon, the agent of the steam ship line came aboard bringing the mail with him, and accompanied by our agent and host, who came to bid us a final farewell. Ten minutes afterwards the steam hoisting apparatus began to wind up the cable, when the two last named gentlemen hurriedly took their departure. Presently the steamer swung gently around, the screw began to revolve, and slowly we glided out of the harbor, casting every now and then a parting glance towards the little seaport, and the towering mountain chain in the background, which hid from our view, probably forever, that region so vast, so arid and desolate—still so full of interest and mystery: the Home of Islâm,—the reputed Cradle of the Human Race.

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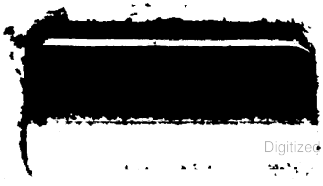

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